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THE
WORKS
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD BYRON.

VOL. XII.

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WORKS

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

J. O. R. D. H. Y. R. O. N.

THE

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WORKS
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
L O R D B Y R O N

VOL. XII.

THE TWO FOSCARI,
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

LEIPSICK,

PRINTED FOR GERHARD FLEISCHER THE YOUNGER.

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THE
WORKS

OF

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

J. O. R. D. R. O. R.

VOL. XII

THE TWO ROMANS

IN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

LEIPZIG

PRINTED FOR GEORGE AND FREDERICK LEIPZIG

1852

THE TWO FOSCARI,
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

The *father* softens, but the *governor's* resolved.

CRITIC.

THE TWO FOSCARI

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

The father's sacrifice, but the government's resolved.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

M E N.

FRANCIS FOSCARI, Doge of Venice.

JACOPO FOSCARI, Son of the Doge.

JAMES LOREDANO, a Patrician.

MARCO MEMMO, a Chief of the Forty.

BARBARIGO, a Senator.

Other Senators, the Council of Ten, Guards Attendants, etc.

W O M A N.

MARINA, Wife of young FOSCARI.

Scene — the Ducal Palace, Venice.

ORAMATIS THESSALIAE

—

THESSALIAE

FRANCIS ROSCARI, 17th of 17th

JACOB ROSCARI, 18th of 18th

JAMES LORREDA, 19th of 19th

MARCO MESTINO, 20th of 20th

BARBARIGO, 21st of 21st

Other names, the names of the

names, etc.

THESSALIAE

CLARUS, 22nd of 22nd

names — the names of the

THE
T W O F O S C A R I.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

*Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO,
meeting.*

LOREDANO.

WHERE is the prisoner?

BARBARIGO.

Reposing from

The Question.

LOREDANO.

The hour's past — fix'd yesterday
For the resumption of his trial. — Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

BARBARIGO.

Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

LOREDANO.

Well?

BARBARIGO.

I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari,
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffer'd beyond nature's
Most stoical endurance.

LOREDANO.

Without owning
His crime.

BARBARIGO.

Perhaps without committing any.
But he avow'd the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

LOREDANO.

We shall see.

BARBARIGO.

You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

LOREDANO.

How far?

BARBARIGO.

To extermination.

LOREDANO.

When they are
Extinct, you may say this. — Let's in to council.

BARBARIGO.

Yet pause — the number of our colleagues is not
Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.

LOREDANO.

And the chief judge, the Doge?

BARBARIGO

No — he

With more than Roman fortitude is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

LOREDANO.

True — true —
His *last*

BARBARIGO.

Will nothing move you?

LOREDANO.

Feels he, think you?

BARBARIGO.

He shows it not.

LOREDANO.

I have mark'd *that* — the wretch!

BARBARIGO.

But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he pass'd the threshold
The old man fainted.

LOREDANO.

It begins to work, then.

BARBARIGO.

The work is half your own.

LOREDANO.

And should be *all* mine —
My father and my uncle are no more.

BARBARIGO.

I have read their epitaph, which says they died
By poison.

LOREDANO.

When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sicken'd shortly: — he is sovereign.

BARBARIGO.

A wretched one.

LOREDANO.

What should they be who make
Orphans?

BARBARIGO.

But *did* the Doge make you so?

LOREDANO.

Yes.

BARBARIGO.

What solid proofs?

LOREDANO.

When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.

BARBARIGO.

But you will move by law?

LOREDANO.

By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

BARBARIGO.

They are such in this
Our state as render retribution casier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of com-
merce,
(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles)

„Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
„Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
„My sire and uncle?“

LOREDANO.

It is written thus.

BARBARIGO.

And will you leave it uneras'd?

LOREDANO.

Till balanced

BARBARIGO.

And how?

(Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their way to „the Hall of the Council of Ten.“)

LOREDANO.

You see the number is complete.

Follow me.

(Exit LOREDANO.)

BARBARIGO *(solus)*.

Follow *thee*! I have follow'd long
Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and
wretch
Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
The waters through them; but this son and sire
Might move the elements to pause, and yet

Must I on hardily like them — Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly!
Lo, where he comes! — Be still, my heart!
they are
Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee?

Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI as prisoner, etc.

GUARD.

Let him rest.

Signor, take time.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble;
But thou may'st stand reprov'd.

GUARD.

I 'll stand the hazard.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That 's kind: — I meet some pity, but no mercy;
This is the first.

GUARD.

And might be last, did they
Who rule behold us.

BARBARIGO (*advancing to the Guards*).

There is one who does:
Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge

Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,
 Wait their last summons — I am of „the Ten,“
 And waiting for that summons sanction you
 Even by my presence: when the last call sounds,
 We 'll in together. — Look well to the prisoner!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

What voice is that? — 'tis Barbarigo's! Ah!
 Our house's foe, and one of my few judges,

BARBARIGO.

To balance such a foe, if such there be,
 Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

True,

He judges.

BARBARIGO.

Then deem not the laws too harsh
 Which yield so much indulgence to a sire
 As to allow his voice in such high matter
 As the state's safety —

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And his son's. I 'm faint;
 Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
 Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

BARBARIGO (*to the Guard*).

Let him approach. I must not speak with him
Further than thus; I have transgress'd my duty
In this brief parley, and must now redeem it.
Within the Council Chamber.

(*Exit BARBARIGO.*)

(*Guard conducting JACOPO FOSCARI to the window.*)

GUARD.

There, sir, 'tis
Open — How feel you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Like a boy — Oh Venice!

GUARD.

And your limbs?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimm'd
The gondola along in childish race,
And masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
May gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure in the pride of strength,
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,

And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands;
 Even to the goal! How many a time have I
 Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
 The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's stroke
 Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
 And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
 Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
 The waves as they arose, and prouder still
 The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
 In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
 Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
 My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
 By those above, till they wax'd fearful; then
 Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
 As show'd that I had search'd the deep: exulting,
 With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
 The long-suspended breath, again I spurn'd
 The foam which broke around me, and pursued
 My track like a sea-bird. — I was a boy then.

GUARD.

Be a man now: there never was more need
 Of manhood's strength.

JACOPO FOSCARI

(looking from the lattice).

My beautiful, my own,
 My only Venice — *this is breath!* Thy breeze,
 Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!

Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howl'd about my Candiotte dungeon, and
Made my heart sick.

GUARD.

I see the colour comes
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength
to bear
What more may be imposed! — I dread to think
on 't.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

They will not banish me again? — No — no,
Let them wring on, I am strong yet.

GUARD.

Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I confess'd
Once — twice before: both times they exiled me.

GUARD.

And the third time will slay you.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place; better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.

GUARD.

And can you so much love the soil which hates
you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

The soil! — Oh no, it is the seed of the soil
Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Bring in the prisoner!

GUARD.

Signor, you hear the order.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ay, I am used to such a summons; 'tis
The third time they have tortured me: then
lend me
Thine arm.

(To the Guard.)

OFFICER.

Take mine, sir; 'tis my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

You! — you are he

Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs —
Away! — I'll walk alone.

OFFICER.

As you please, signor;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I darcd not disobey the Council when
They —

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Bade thee stretch me on their horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not — that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that order,
But keep off from till 'tis issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching,
And the cold drops strain through my brow, as
if —

But onward — I have borne it — I can bear it. —
How looks my father?

OFFICER.

With his wonted aspect.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

So does the earth, and sky, the blue of ocean,
The brightness of our city, and her domes,
The mirth of her Piazza, even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
Even here, into these chambers of the unknown

Who govern, and the unknown and the un-
number'd

Judged and destroy'd in silence, — all things
wear

The self-same aspect, to my very sire!

Nothing can sympathize with Foscari,

Not even a Foscari. — Sir, I attend you.

(Exeunt JACOPO FOSCARI, Officer etc.)

Enter MEMMO and another SENATOR.

MEMMO.

He 's gone — we are too late: — think you“ the
Ten“

Will sit for any length of time to-day?

SENATOR.

They say the prisoner in most obdurate,
Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.

MEMMO.

And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
From us, the premier nobles of the state,
As from the people.

SENATOR.

Save the wonted rumours,
Which (like the tales of spectres that are rife

Near ruin'd buildings) never have been proved,
Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathom'd mysteries.

MEMMO.

But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

SENATOR.

Or Doge?

MEMMO.

Why, no, not if I can avoid it.

SENATOR.

'Tis the first station of the state, and may
Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
Attain'd by noble aspirants.

MEMMO.

To such

I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
Is limited: I'd rather be an unit
Of an united and imperial „Ten,“
Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher. —
Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA with a female attendant.

MARINA.

What, no one? — I am wrong, there still are
two;

But they are senators.

MEMMO.

Most noble lady,
Command us.

MARINA.

I command! — Alas! my life
Has been one long entreaty, and a vaine one.

MEMMO.

I understand thee, but I must not answer.

MARINA (*fiercely*).

True — none dare answer here save on the rack,
Or question save those —

MEMMO (*interrupting her*).

High-born dame! bethink thee
Where thou now art.

MARINA.

Where I now am! — It was
My husband's father's palace.

MEMMO.

The Duke's palace.

MARINA.

And his son's prison; — true, I have not forgot it;

And if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious
Memmo

For pointing out the pleasures of the place.

MEMMO.

Be calm!

MARINA (*looking up towards heaven*).

I am; but oh, thou eternal God!

Canst *thou* continue so, with such a world?

MEMMO.

Thy husband yet may be absolved.

MARINA.

He is,

In heaven. I pray you, signor senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake,
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had, they are there within, or were at least
An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will *he* condemn *him*?

MEMMO.

I trust not.

MARINA.

But if

He does not, there are those will sentence both.

MEMMO.

They can.

MARINA.

And with them power and will are one
In wickedness: — my husband's lost!

MEMMO.

Not so;

Justice is judge in Venice.

MARINA.

If it were so

There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons; but „the Ten 's“ is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail!

(A faint cry within.)

SENATOR.

Hark!

MEMMO.

'Twas a cry of—

MARINA.

No, no; not my husband's —
Not Foscari's.

MEMMO.

The voice was —

MARINA.

Not his: no.

He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,
Not his — not his — he'll die in silence.

(A faint groan again within.)

MEMMO.

What!

Again?

MARINA.

His voice! it seem'd so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but — no — no — no — it mut have
been
A fearful pang which wrung a groan from him

SENATOR.

And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst
thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain, in silence?

MARINA.

We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari,
Though they sweep both the Doge and son from
life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs;
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shriek'd,
But did not, for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears,

MEMMO.

All 's silent now.

MARINA.

Perhaps all 's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

MEMMO.

How now, friend, what seek you?

OFFICER.

A leech. The prisoner has fainted.

(Exit Officer.)

MEMMO.

Lady,

'Twere better to retire.

SENATOR *(offering to assist her)*.

I pray thee do so.

MARINA.

Off! I will tend him.

MEMMO.

You! Remember, lady!

Ingress is given to none within those chambers,
Except „the Ten,“ and their familiars.

MARINA.

Well,

I know that none who enter there return

As they have enter'd — many never; but
'They shall not balk my entrance.

MEMMO.

Alas this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.

MARINA.

Who shall oppose me?

MEMMO.

They?

Whose duty 'tis to do so.

MARINA.

'Tis *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends, who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass.

MEMMO.

It is impossible.

MARINA.

That shall be tried.

Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through
hosts

With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way;
This is the Doge's palace; I am wife

Of the Duke's son, the *innocent* Duke's son,
And they shall hear this!

MEMMO.

It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.

MARINA.

What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.

(Exit MARINA.)

SENATOR.

Poor lady!

MEMMO.

'Tis mere desperation; she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

SENATOR.

And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.

(*The Officer passes over the stage with another
person.*)

MEMMO.

I hardly
Thought that the Ten had even this touch of pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

SENATOR.

Pity! Is 't pity to recall to feeling

The wretch too happy to escape to death
By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?

MEMMO.

I marvel they condemn him not at once.

SENATOR.

That's not their policy: they'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

MEMMO.

Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

SENATOR.

None, save the, letter, which he says was written,
Address'd to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-convey'd to Venice.

MEMMO.

But as a culprit.

SENATOR.

Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought, so he avouches.

MEMMO.

The accusation of the bribes was proved.

SENATOR.

Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annull'd by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of „the 'Ten.“

MEMMO.

Then why not clear him?

SENATOR.

That
They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almorò Donado, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

MEMMO.

There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose —
But here come two of „the Ten;“ let us retire.

(Exeunt MEMMO and Senator.)

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

BARBARIGO (*addressing*) LOREDANO).

That were too much: believe me, 'twas not meet
The trial should go further at this moment.

LOREDANO.

And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?

BARBARIGO.

No,

That 's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's
state.

LOREDANO.

And had he not recover'd?

BARBARIGO.

To relapse

Upon the least renewal.

LOREDANO.

'Twas not tried.

BARBARIGO.

'Tis vain to murmur; the majority
In council were against you.

LOREDANO.

Thanks to you, sir,

And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'erruled my own.

BARBARIGO.

I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
Makes me wish —

LOREDANO.

What?

BARBARIGO.

That *you* would sometimes feel,
As I do always.

LOREDANO.

Go to, you 're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,
And melted by a tear — a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy!

BARBARIGO.

He shed

No tears.

LOREDANO.

He cried out twice.

BARBARIGO.

A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
But wrung from pangs, and follow'd by no
prayers.

LOREDANO.

He mutter'd many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.

BARBARIGO.

That I heard not;
You stood more near him.

LOREDANO.

I did so.

BARBARIGO.

Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touch'd with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.

LOREDANO.

I believed that swoon
His last.

BARBARIGO.

And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?

LOREDANO.

If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavow'd, he'll be lamented.

BARBARIGO.

What, wouldst thou slay his memory?

LOREDANO.

Wouldst thou have
His state descend to his children as it must,
If he die unattainted?

BARBARIGO.

War with *them* too?

LOREDANO.

With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.

BARBARIGO.

And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repress'd convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away
In stern serenity; these moved you not?

(*Exit LOREDANO.*)

He 's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch moved me

More by his silence than a thousand outcries
Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into
The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used
To such sights. I must think no more of this,
Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes their former injuries, and lose
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts; but for the present, Foscari
Has a short hourly respite, granted at

The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings. — Lo! they
come:

How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear
To look on them again in this extremity:
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

(*Exit BARBARIGO.*)

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Hall in the DOGE's Palace.

The DOGE and a SENATOR.

SENATOR.

Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

DOGE.

Now;

I overlook'd it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen —

(The DOGE sits down and signs the paper.)

There, signor.

SENATOR *(looking at the paper)*.

You have forgot; it is not sign'd.

DOGE.

Not sign'd? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipp'd the pen without effect.

SENATOR (*dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper before the DOGE*).

Your hand, too, shakes, my lord: allow me,
thus —

DOGE.

'Tis done, I thank you.

SENATOR.

Thus the act confirm'd
By you and by „the Ten,“ gives peace to Venice.

DOGE.

'Tis long since she enjoy'd it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!

SENATOR.

'Tis almost
Thirty four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.

DOGE.

No doubt:

I found her queen of ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy; it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema
And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

SENATOR.

'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

DOGE.

Perhaps so.

SENATOR.

Which should be made manifest.

DOGE.

I have not complain'd, sir.

SENATOR.

My good lord, forgive me.

DOGE.

For what?

SENATOR.

My heart bleeds for you.

DOGE.

For me, signor?

SENATOR.

And for your —

DOGE.

Stop!

SENATOR.

I must have way, my lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness,
Not to feel deeply for your son,

DOGE.

Was this
In your commission?

SENATOR.

What, my lord?

DOGE.

This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's sign'd;
Return with it to them who sent you.

SENATOR.

I

Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their re-union.

DOGE.

Say, when they will — now, even at this mo-
ment,

If it so please them: I am the state's servant.

SENATOR.

They would accord some time for your repose.

DOGE.

I have no repose, that is, none which shall cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.

Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever.

(Exit SENATOR.)

(The DOGE remains in silence.)

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

Prince!

DOGE.

Say on.

ATTENDANT.

The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.

DOGE.

Bid her enter. Poor

Marina!

(Exit Attendant.)

(The DOGE remains in silence as before.)

Enter MARINA.

MARINA.

I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

DOGE.

I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The state.

MARINA.

I wish'd to speak to you of *him*.

DOGE.

Your husband?

MARINA.

And your son,

DOGE.

Proceed, my daughter!

MARINA.

I had obtained permission from „the Ten“
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

DOGE.

You had so.

MARINA.

'Tis revoked.

DOGE.

By whom?

MARINA.

„The Ten.“—When we had reach'd „the Bridge
of Sighs,“

Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurr'd: a messenger was sent back to
„The Ten;“ but as the court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal re-assembled
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

DOGE.

True,

The form has been omitted in the haste
 With which the court adjourn'd, and till it meets
 'Tis dubious.

MARINA.

Till it meets! and when it meets,
 They 'll torture him again; and he and I
 Must purchase by renewal of the rack
 The interview of husband and of wife,
 The holiest tie beneath the heavens? — Oh God!
 Dost thou see this?

DOGE.

Child — child —

MARINA (*abruptly*).Call *me* not „child!“

You soon will have no children — you deserve
 none —

You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
 In circumstances which would call forth tears
 Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not
 weep

Their boys who died in battle, is it written
 That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
 Stretch'd forth a hand to save them?

DOGE.

You behold me:

I cannot weep — I would I could; but if
 Each white hair on this head were a young life,
 This ducal cap the diadem of earth,
 This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
 A talisman to still them — I'd give all
 For him.

MARINA.

With less he surely might be saved.

DOGE.

That answer only shows you know not Venice.
 Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
 In all her mystery. Hear me — they who aim
 At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
 The sire's destruction would not save the son;
 They work by different means to the same end,
 And that is — but they have not conquer'd yet.

MARINA.

But they have crush'd.

DOGE.

Nor crush'd as yet — I live.

MARINA.

And your son, — how long will he live?

DOGE.

I trust,

For all that yet is past, as many years
 And happier than his father. The rash boy,

Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguish'd
In their accursed bosoms.

DOGE.

You know not —

MARINA.

I do — I do — and so should you, methinks —
That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suck-
led —

Who have loved, or talk'd at least of love —
have given

Their hands in sacred vows — have danced their
habes

Upon their knees, perhaps have mourn'd above
them

In pain, in peril, or in death — who are,
Or were at least in seeming human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself,
You, who abet them?

DOGE.

I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

MARINA.

You know it well,
And feel it nothing.

DOGE.

I have borne so much;
That words have ceased to shake me.

MARINA.

Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your
flesh shook not;
And, after that, what are a woman's words?
No more than woman's tears, that they should
shake you.

DOGE.

Woman, this clamorous grief of thine, I tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weigh'd with that
Which — but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

MARINA.

Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity! — 'tis a word
Strange to thy heart — how came it on thy lips?

DOGE.

I must bear these reproaches, though they
wrong me.

Couldst thou but read —

MARINA.

'Tis not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts, — where then
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

DOGE (*pointing downwards*).

There!

MARINA.

In the earth?

DOGE.

To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which
press it
Now, you will know me better.

MARINA.

Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

DOGE.

Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloke their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was
When I received it.

MARINA.

But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save:
You were the last to bear it.

DOGE.

Would it were so!

Better for him he never had been born,
Better for me. — I have seen our house disho-
nour'd.

MARINA.

That 's false! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppress'd but not disgraced, crush'd, overwhelm'd,
Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonour'd! — *he* dishonour'd!
I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dishonour'd;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'Tis ye who are all traitors, tyrant! — ye!
Did you but love your country like this victim
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You 'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

DOGE.

He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me
Than Jacopo's disgrace.

MARINA.

That word again?

DOGE.

Has he not been condemn'd?

MARINA.

Is none but guilt so?

DOGE.

Time may restore his memory — I would hope so.
He was my pride, my — but 'tis useless now —
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were ominous.

MARINA.

I say he's innocent! And were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

DOGE.

I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those
duties;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused,
They must then be fulfill'd.

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

A message from
„The Ten.“

DOGE.

Who bears it?

ATTENDANT.

Noble Loredano.

DOGE.

He! — but admit him.

(Exit Attendant.)

MARINA.

Must I then retire?

DOGE.

Perhaps it is not requisite, if this
Concerns your husband, and if not — Well,
signor,
Your pleasure!

(To LOREDANO entering.)

LOREDANO.

I bear that of „the Ten.“

DOGE.

They

Have chosen well their envoy.

LOREDANO.

'Tis *their* choice.

Which leads me here.

DOGE.

It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy. — Proceed.

LOREDANO.

We have decided.

DOGE.

We?

LOREDANO.

„The Ten“ in council.

DOGE.

What! have they met again, and met without
Apprizing me?

LOREDANO.

They wish'd to spare your feelings,
No less than age.

DOGE.

That's new — when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.

LOREDANO.

You know well
That they have power to'act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge.

DOGE.

'Tis some years since I learn'd this, long before
I became Doge, or dream'd of such advancement.
You need not school me, signor: I sate in
That council when you were a young patrician.

LOREDANO.

True, in my father's time; I have heard him and

The admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your highness may remember them; they both
Died suddenly.

DOGE.

And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.

LOREDANO.

No doubt; yet most men like to live their days out.

DOGE.

And did not they?

LOREDANO.

The grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.

DOGE.

Is that so strange
That you repeat the word emphatically?

LOREDANO.

So far from strange, that never was there death
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so?

DOGE.

What should I think of mortals?

LOREDANO.

That they have mortal foes.

DOGE.

I understand you;

Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things.

LOREDANO.

You best know if I should be so.

DOGE.

I do.

Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

LOREDANO.

Who dares say so?

DOGE.

I! — 'Tis true

Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:
I never work'd by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is, your existence.

LOREDANO.

I fear not.

DOGE.

You have no cause, being what I am; but were I

That you would have me thought, you long ere
now

Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not,

LOREDANO.

I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.

DOGE.

But I, good signor,
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have
strain'd

(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what
I could enforce for my authority
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the high altar, even unto
The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,

Safety and all save honour, the decrees,
The health, the pride, and welfare of the state.
And now, sir, to your business.

LOREDANO.

'Tis decreed,

That, without farther repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is,
(„The Ten,“ dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question till a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avow'd his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his,)
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which convey'd him.

MARINA.

Thank God! At least they will not drag him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to eschape from such a land.

DOGE.

That is not a Venetian thought, my daughter.

MARINA.

No, t'was too human. May I share his exile.

LOREDANO.

Of this „the Ten“ said nothing.

MARINA.

So I thought:
That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?

LOREDANO.

It was not named.

MARINA (*to the DOGE*).

Then, father,
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:
(*To LOREDANO.*)

And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

DOGE.

I will endeavour.

MARINA.

And you, signor?

LOREDANO.

Lady!

'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

MARINA.

Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of—

DOGE.

Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these things?

MARINA.

A prince's and his subject's.

LOREDANO.

Subject!

MARINA.

Oh!

It galls you: — well, you are his equal, as
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant: — well, then, you 're a
prince,

A princely noble; and what then am I?

LOREDANO.

The offspring of a noble house.

MARINA.

And wedded

To one as noble. What or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts?

LOREDANO.

The presence of your husband's judges.

DOGE.

And

The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

MARINA.

Keep

Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,

Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?

DOGE.

Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.

LOREDANO.

My mission *here* is to the *Doge*.

DOGE.

Then say
The Doge will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father —

LOREDANO.

I remember *mine*. — Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke.

(Exit LOREDANO.)

MARINA.

Are you content?

DOGE.

I am what you behold.

MARINA.

And that's a mystery.

DOGE.

All things are so to mortals; who can read them

Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume — man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves his heart and
brain,

But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins
We find in others, nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of fortune;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against Fate, 'twere well
We should remember Fortune can take nought
Save what she *gave* — the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all pas-
sions

Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow — clay from first to last,
The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon days,
Our days on seasons, our whole being on
Something which is not *us*! — So, we are slaves,

The greatest as the meanest — nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm;
And when we think we lead, we are most led,
And still towards death, a thing which comes as
much

Without our act or choice, as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinn'd in some old world,
And *this* is hell: the best is, that it is not
Eternal.

MARINA.

These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

DOGE.

And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am call'd upon
To judge my son? I have administer'd
My country faithfully — victoriously —
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, me single.

MARINA.

And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.

DOGE.

You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.

MARINA.

And if

They should, I will fly with him.

DOGE.

That can ne'er be.

And whither would you fly?

MARINA.

I know not, reckon not —

To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman —

Any where, where we might respire unfetter'd,

And live nor girt by spies, nor liable

To edicts of inquisitors of state.

DOGE.

What, wouldst thou have a renegade for husband,
And turn him into traitor?

MARINA,

He is none!

The country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem
None rebels except subjects? The prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.

DOGE.

I cannot

Charge me with such a breach of faith.

MARINA.

No; thou
 Observ'st, obey'st, such laws as make old Draco's
 A code of mercy by comparison.

DOGE.

I found the law; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the
 charter
Left by our fathers.

MARINA.

Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?

DOGE.

Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is — a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory, (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeath'd
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people sway'd by senates.

MARINA.

Rather say,
Groan'd under the stern oligarchs.

DOGE.

Perhaps so;

E

But yet subdued the world: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintain'd in vigour.

MARINA.

This means that you are more a Doge than father.

DOGE.

It means, I am more citizen than either.
If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

MARINA.

Accursed be the city where the laws
Would stifle nature's!

DOGE.

Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given them
To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
She might decree.

MARINA.

And this is patriotism?

To me it seems the worst barbarity.

Let me seek out my husband: the sage „Ten,“

With all its jealousy, will hardly war

So far with a weak woman as deny me

A moment's access to his dungeon.

DOGE.

I'll

So far take on myself, as order that

You may be admitted.

MARINA.

And what shall I say

To Foscari from his father?

DOGE.

That he obey

The laws.

MARINA.

And nothing more? Will you not see him

Ere he depart? It may be the last time.

DOGE.

The last! — my boy! — the last time I shall see

My last of children! Tell him I will come.

(Exeunt.)

ACT III. SCENE I

*The Prison of JACOPO FOSCARI.*JACOPO FOSCARI (*solus*).

No light, save yon faint gleam, which shows me
walls

Which never echo'd but to sorrow's sounds,
The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clank'd, the groan
Of death, the imprecation of despair!

And yet for this I have return'd to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that time, which
wears

The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and here
Must I consume my own; which never beat
For Venice but with such a yearning as

The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these which

(Approaching the wall.)

Are scrawl'd along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names
Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history,
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
I recognize some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches.

(He engraves his name.)

Enter a familiar of „the Ten.“

FAMILIAR.

I bring you food.

JACOPO FOSCARI

I pray you set it down;

I am past hunger: but my lips are parch'd —
The water!

FAMILIAR.

There.

JACOPO FOSCARI (*after drinking*).

I thank you: I am better.

FAMILIAR.

I am commanded to inform you that —
Your further trial is postponed.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Till when?

FAMILIAR.

I know not.— It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ah! they relent, then — I had ceased to hope it:
'Twas time.

Enter MARINA.

MARINA.

My best beloved!

JACOPO FOSCARI (*embracing her*)

My true wife,

And only friend! What happiness!

MARINA.

We'll part

No more.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

How! wouldst thou share a dungeon?

MARINA.

Ay,

The rack, the grave, all — any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that — all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.
How dost thou? How are those worn limbs?

Alas!

Why do I ask? Thy paleness —

JACOPO FOSCARI.

'Tis the joy

Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!

MARINA.

'Tis

The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine
eyes —

No, not thine eyes — they sparkle — how they
sparkle!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And thine! — but I am blinded by the torch.

MARINA.

As I had been without it. Couldst thou see here?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Nothing at first; but use and time had taught me
Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the gray twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice; but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

MARINA.

What?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

My name: look, 'tis here — recorded next
The name of him who here preceded me,
If dungeon dates say true.

MARINA.

And what of him?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

These walls are silent of men's ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,

Or those who soon must be so — *What of him?*
Thou askest. — What of me? may soon be ask'd,
With the like answer — doubt and dreadful sur-
mise —

Unless thou tell'st my tale.

MARINA.

I speak of thee!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And wherefore not? All then shall speak of me:
The tyranny of silence is not lasting
And, though events be hidden, just men's groans
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.

MARINA.

Thy life is safe.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And liberty?

MARINA.

The mind should make its own.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That has a noble sound; but 'tis a sound,
A music most impressive, but too transient:
The mind is much, but is not all. The mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,

Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are things
More woful — such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.

MARINA.

Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is prince.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That thought would scarcely aid me to endure it.
My doom is common, many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day; for, save the jailor's torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude: my soul is social.

MARINA.

I will be with thee.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ah! if it were so!
But *that* they never granted — nor will grant,

And I shall be alone : no men — no books —
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I ask'd for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they were
Refused me, so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The hall not far from hence, which bears on high
Hundreds of doges, and their deeds and dates.

MARINA.

I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I know it — look !

*(He points to his limbs, as referring to the tor-
tures which he had undergone.)*

MARINA.

No — no — no more of that : even they relent
From that atrocity.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

What then ?

MARINA.

That you

Return to Candia.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Then my last hope's gone.

I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoy'd my spirits up
Like a ship on the ocean toss'd by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accursed isle of slaves, and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seem'd mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

MARINA.

And *here*?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

At once — by better means, as briefer.
What! would they even deny me my sires' sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

My husband!

I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is passion, and not patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Well I know *how* wretched!

MARINA.

And yet you see how from their banishment
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remain'd of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean-Rome;
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking
Another region, with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country,
And many thoughts; but afterwards address'd
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this — though I know not.

MARINA.

Wherefore not?

It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ay — we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting
Or after their departure; of that malady *
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrain'd from treading them?
That melody**, which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is strength,
I say, the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country, can love nothing.

MARINA.

ObeY her, then; 'tis she that puts thee forth.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ay, there it is: 'tis like a mother's curse
Upon my soul — the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,

* The calenture.

** Alluding to the Swiss air and its effects.

Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitch'd together — I'm alone.

MARINA.

You shall be so no more — I will go with thee.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

My best Marina! — and our children?

MARINA.

They,

I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy (which holds all ties
As threads, which may be broken at her pleasure),
Will not be suffer'd to proceed with us.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And canst thou leave them?

MARINA.

Yes. With many a pang.
But — I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
By duties paramount; and 'tis our first
On earth to bear.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Have I not borne?

MARINA.

Too much
From tyrannous injustice; and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,

Which, as compared with what you have undergone

Of late, is mercy.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessels track
Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart; you never
Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbed vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.

MARINA.

I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems), and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles: we must sail ere night.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?

MARINA.

You will.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Where?

MARINA.

Here or in the ducal chamber —
He said not which. I would that you could bear
Your exile as he bears it.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Blame him not.

I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his aged head
Suspicion from „the Ten,“ and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

MARINA.

Accumulated!

What pangs are those they have spared you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 'twas
Upon my former exile.

MARINA.

That is true,
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves — away — away —
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorr'd,
Unjust, and —

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country?

MARINA.

Men and angels!
The blood of myriads reeking up to heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dun-
geons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and
subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence*. Couldst thou
say

Aught in its favour, who would praise like *thee*?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Let us address us then, since so it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here?

Enter LOREDANO, attended by Familiars.

LOREDANO (*to the Familiars*).

Retire,
But leave the torch.
(*Exeunt the two Familiars.*)

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn
Such presence hither.

LOREDANO.

'This not the first time
I have visited these places.

MARINA.

Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?

LOREDANO.

Neither are of my office, noble lady!
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce,, the Ten's "decree.

MARINA.

That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known.

LOREDANO.

As how?

MARINA.

I have inform'd him, not so gently,
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues; but he knew it.
If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence!
'The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I pray you; calm you:
What can avail such words?

MARINA.

To let him know
That he is known.

LOREDANO.

Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

MARINA.

I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.

LOREDANO.

You do, well
To nurse them wisely. Foscari — you know
Your sentence, then?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Return to Candia?

LOREDANO.

True —

For life.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Not long.

LOREDANO.

I said — for *life*.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And I

Repeat — 'not long.

LOREDANO.

A year's imprisonment

In Canea — afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Both the same to me: the after.
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is 't true my wife accompanies me?

LOREDANO.

Yes,

If she so wills it.

MARINA.

Who obtain'd that justice?

LOREDANO.

One who wars not with women.

MARINA.

But oppresses
Men: howsoever, let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have ask'd or taken
From him or such as he is.

LOREDANO.

He receives them
As they are offer'd.

May they thrive with him
So much! — no more.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,

And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

MARINA.

Nobler!

LOREDANO.

How nobler?

MARINA.

As more generous!

We say the „generous steed“ to express the
purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I 've learnt,
although

Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skimm'd the coasts
Of Egypt, and her neighbour Araby:

And why not say as soon „the *generous man*?“
If race be aught, it is in qualities

More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay —

Look not so stern — but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree's most green

Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have blush'd
For such a son — thou cold inveterate hater!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Again, Marina!

MARINA.

Again! *still*, Marina.

See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?
Let him partake it!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

That were difficult.

MARINA.

Nothing more easy. He partakes it now —
Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
A few brief words of truth shame the devil's ser-
vants

No less than master; I have probed his soul
A moment, as the eternal fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks
from me!

With death, and chains, and exile in his hand
To scatter o'er his kind as he things fit:
They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His tempter's.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

This is mere insanity.

MARINA.

It may be so; and *who* hath made us *mad*?

LOREDANO.

Let her go on; it irks not me.

MARINA.

That's false!

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You came
To be sued to in vain — to mark our tears,
And hoard our groans — to gaze upon the wreck
Which you have made a prince's son — my hus-
band;

In short, to trample on the fallen — an office
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him!
How have you sped? We are wretched, signor, as
Your plots could make, and vengeance could
desire us,
And how *feel* you?

LOREDANO.

As rocks.

MARINA.

By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shiver'd. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Whish he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.

Enter the DOGE.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

My father!

DOGE (*embracing him.*)

Jacopo! my son — my son!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

My father still! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name — *our* name!

DOGE.

My boy!

Couldst thou but know —

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I rarely, sir, have murmur'd.

DOGE.

DOGE.

I feel too much thou hast not.

MARINA.

Doge, look there!

(She points to LOREDANO.)

DOGE.

I see the man — what mean'st thou?

MARINA.

Caution!

LOREDANO.

Being

The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

MARINA.

Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

DOGE.

Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.

LOREDANO.

You may know him better.

MARINA.

Yes; *worse* he could not.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it — is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

DOGE.

You behold
These white hairs!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!
I loved you ever — never more than now.
Look to my children — to your last child's
children:

Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also?

MARINA.

No — not *here*.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

They might behold their parent any where.

MARINA.

I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that
Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well,
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
But let it only be their *heritage*,
And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damps, too, and yon *thick green*
wave

Which floats above the place where we now
stand —

A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
Might strike them: *this is not their* atmosphere,
However you — and you — and, most of all,
As worthiest — *you*, sir, noble Loredano!
May breathe it without prejudice.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I had not
Reflecte upon this, but acquiesce.
I shall depart, then, without meeting them?

DOGE.

Not so: they shall await you in my chamber.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And must I leave them all?

LOREDANO.

You must.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Not one?

LOREDANO.

They are the state's.

MARINA.

I thought they had been mine.

LOREDANO.

They are, in all maternal things.

MARINA.

That is,
In all things painful. If they 're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die,
To me to bury and to mourn; but if
They live, they 'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles — what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles!
Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers!

LOREDANO.

The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

How know you that here, where the genial wind
Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?

LOREDANO.

'Twas so

When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the „Riva di Schiavoni.“

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.

DOGE.

Be firm, my son!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I will do my endeavour.

MARINA.

Farewell! at least to this detested dungeon;
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.

LOREDANO.

And present
Liberation.

DOGE.

He speaks truth.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

No doubt: but 'tis

Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change
them.

But I reproach not.

LOREDANO.

'The time narrows, signor.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Alas! I little thought so lingeringly
To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and —

DOGE.

Boy! no tears.

MARINA.

Let them flow on: he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart — that too kind heart —
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now,
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.

LOREDANO (*to the Familiar*).

The torch, there!

MARINA.

Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

DOGE.

My son, you are feeble; take this hand.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Alas !

Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

LOREDANO.

Take mine.

MARINA.

Touch it not, Foscari; 'twill sting you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we are
 plunged,

No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you;
It could not save, but will support you ever.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

BARBARIGO.

And have you confidence in such a project?

LOREDANO.

I have.

BARBARIGO.

'Tis hard upon his years.

LOREDANO.

Say rather

Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.

BARBARIGO

'Twill break his heart.

LOREDANO.

Age has no heart to break.

He has seen his son's half broken, and, except

A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.

BARBARIGO.

In his countenance, I grant you; never;
But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where is he?

LOREDANO.

In his own portion of the palace, with
His son, and the whole race of Foscaris.

BARBARIGO.

Bidding farewell.

LOREDANO.

A last. As soon he shall
Bid to this dukedom.

BARBARIGO.

When embarks the son?

LOREDANO.

Forthwith — when this long leave is taken. 'Tis
Time to admonish them again.

BARBARIGO.

Forbear;

Retrench not from their moments.

LOREDANO.

Not I, now

We have higher business for our own. This day

Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment,
And that is vengeance.

BARBARIGO.

In my mind, too deep.

LOREDANO.

'Tis moderate — not even life for life, the rule
Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

BARBARIGO.

Did not the Doge deny this strongly?

LOREDANO.

Doubtless.

BARBARIGO.

And did not this shake your suspicion?

LOREDANO.

No.

BARBARIGO.

But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.

LOREDANO.

As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees,

(Like Barbarossa to the Pope), to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

BARBARIGO.

What, if he will not?

LOREDANO.

We'll elect another,
And make him null.

BARBARIGO.

But will the laws uphold us?

LOREDANO.

What laws? —, The Ten“ are laws; and if they
were not,

I will be legislator in this business.

BARBARIGO.

At your own peril?

LOREDANO.

There is none, I tell you,
Our powers are such.

BARBARIGO.

But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.

LOREDANO.

The better reason
To grant it the third time.

BARBARIGO.

Unask'd?

LOREDANO.

And men of eighty
More seldom still.

BARBARIGO.

And why not wait these few years?

LOREDANO.

Because we have waited long enough, and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! In to council!

(Exeunt LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.)

Enter MEMMO and a Senator.

SENATOR.

A summons to „the Ten!“ Why so?

MEMMO.

„The Ten“
Alone can answer: they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summon'd —
That is enough.

SENATOR.

For them, but not for us;
I would know why.

MEMMO.

You will know why anon,
If you obey; and, if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obey'd

Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

SENATOR.

Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.

MEMMO.

Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth
Something, at least to you or me.

SENATOR.

I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.

MEMMO

Let us not
Be latest in obeying „the Ten's“ summons

SENATOR.

All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far — let 's in.

MEMMO.

The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils — we will not be least so.

(*Exeunt.*)

*Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI,
MARINA.*

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Ah, father! though I must and will depart,
Yet—yet—I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annex'd they please,
But let me still return.

DOGE.

Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our country's will: 'tis not
For us to look beyond.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

DOGE.

Alas!

You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so
Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterred ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round

To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.

MARINA.

My husband! let us on: this but prolongs
Our sorrow.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

But we are not summon'd yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurl'd:—who knows?
The wind may change.

MARINA.

And if it do, it will not
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the galley's oars
Will quickly clear the harbour.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Oh, ye elements!
Where are your storms?

MARINA.

In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest!

Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
 A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
 Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
 The land I love, and never shall see more!

MARINA.

And wish you this with *me* beside you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

No —

No — not for thee, too good, too kind! May'st
 thou

Live long to be a mother to those children
 Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
 Of such support! But for myself alone,
 May all the winds of heaven howl down the Gulf,
 And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
 Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
 As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
 Cast me out from amongst them, as an offering
 To appease the waves. The billow which de-
 stroys me

Will be more merciful than man, and bear me,
 Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave,
 From fisher's hand upon the desolate strand,
 Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er re-
 ceived

One lacerated like the heart which then

Will be — But wherefore breaks it not? why
live I?

MARINA.

To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why
What is this to the things thou hast borne in si-
lence —
Imprisonment and actual torture?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Double,
'Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

DOGE.

Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Forgive —

DOGE.

What?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

My poor mother for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestow'd upon me as my sire.

MARINA.

What hast thou done?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chasten'd and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter.

MARINA.

Fear not: *that* 's reserved
For your oppressors.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Let me hope not.

MARINA.

Hope not?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.

MARINA.

All! the consummate fiends! A thousand fold
May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon them!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

They may repent.

MARINA.

And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

OFFICER.

Signor! the boat is at the shore — the wind
Is rising — we are ready to attend you.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

And I to be attended. Once more, father.
Your hand!

DOGE.

Take it. Alas! how thine own trembles!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

No — you mistake; 'tis yours that shakes, my
father.

Farewell!

DOGE.

Farewell! Is there aught else?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

No — nothing.

(To the Officer.)

Lend me your arm; good signor.

OFFICER.

You turn pale —
Let me support you — paler — ho! some aid there!
Some water!

MARINA.

Ah, he is dying!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Now, I 'm ready —
My eyes swim strangely — where 's the door?

MARINA.

Away!

Let me support him — my best love! Oh, God!
How faintly beats this heart — this pulse!

JACOPO FOSCARI.

The light!

Is it the light? — I am faint.

(Officer presents him with water)

OFFICER.

He will be better,
Perhaps in the air.

JACOPO FOSCARI.

I doubt not. Father — wife —
Your hands!

MARINA.

There 's death in that damp clammy grasp.
Oh God! — My Foscari, how fare you?

JACOPO FOSCARI.

Well!

(He dies.)

OFFICER.

He 's gone!

DOGE.

He 's free.

MARINA.

No—no, he is not dead;
There must be life yet in that heart—he could not
Thus leave me.

DOGE.

Daughter!

MARINA.

Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now — thou hast no son,
Oh, Foscari!

OFFICER.

We must remove the body.

MARINA.

Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his re-
mains
To those who know to honour them.

OFFICER.

I must

Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.

DOGE.

Inform the signory from *me*, the Doge,
 They have no further power upon those ashes:
 While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject —
 Now he is *mine* — my broken-hearted boy!

(Exit Officer.)

MARINA.

And I must live!

DOGE.

Your children live, Marina.

MARINA.

My children! true — they live, and I must live
To bring them up to serve the state, and die
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings
Were bareness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!

DOGE.

My unhappy children!

MARINA.

What!

You feel it then at last — you! — Where is now
The stoic of the state?

DOGE (*throwing himself down by the body*).

Here!

MARINA.

Ay, weep on!

I thought you had no tears — you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more — never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

LOREDANO.

What's here?

MARINA.

Ah! the devil come to insult the dead! Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground.

A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

BARBARIGO.

Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But pass'd here merely on our path from council

MARINA.

Pass on.

LOREDANO.

We sought the Doge.

MARINA (*pointing to the DOGE, who is still on the
ground by his son's body*).

He 's busy, look,

About the business *you* provided for him,
Are ye content?

BARBARIGO.

We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

MARINA.

No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.

DOGE (*rising*).

Sirs, I am ready.

BARBARIGO.

No — not now.

LOREDANO.

Yet 'twas important.

DOGE.

If 'twas so, I can
Only repeat — I am ready.

BARBARIGO.

It shall not be
Just now, though Venice totter'd o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

DOGE.

I thank you. If the tidings which you bring
Are evil, you may say them; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there:
If they be good, say on; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.

BARBARIGO.

I would they could!

DOGE.

I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.

MARINA.

Ah! I thought it would be so

DOGE.

What mean you?

MARINA

Lo! there is the blood beginning
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari—
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.

(To LOREDANO.)

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How death itself bears witness to thy deeds!

DOGE.

My child! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. (*To his attendants.*) Signors,
if it please you,

Within an hour I'll hear you.

(*Exeunt DOGE, MARINA, and attendans with
the body.*)

(*Manent LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.*)

BARBARIGO.

He must not

Be troubled now.

LOREDANO.

He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.

BARBARIGO.

These are words;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in
Upon it barbarous.

LOREDANO.

Sorrow preys upon

Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.

BARBARIGO.

And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?

LOREDANO.

The thing's decreed. The giunta and the Ten
Have made it law — who shall oppose that law?

BARBARIGO.

Humanity!

LOREDANO.

Because his son is dead?

BARBARIGO.

And yet unburied.

LOREDANO.

Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not — once past.

BARBARIGO.

I'll not consent.

LOREDANO.

You have consented to
All that's essential — leave the rest to me.

BARBARIGO.

Why press his abdication now?

LOREDANO.

The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

BARBARIGO.

You have a son.

LOREDANO.

I have — and had a father.

BARBARIGO.

Still so inexorable?

LOREDANO.

Still.

BARBARIGO.

But let him

Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.

LOREDANO.

Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle — I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal: he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.

I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons, and he had four, are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.

BARBARIGO.

And art thou sure
He dealt in such?

LOREDANO.

Most sure.

BARBARIGO.

And yet he seems
All openess.

LOREDANO.

And so he seem'd not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.

BARBARIGO.

The attainted
And foreign traitor?

LOREDANO.

Even so: when *he*
After the very night in which „the Ten“
(Join'd with the Doge), decided his destruction,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him

„The good day or good night?“ his Doge-ship
answer'd,

„That he in truth had pass'd a night of vigil,

„In which (he added with a gracious smile),

„There often has been question about you*.“

'Twas true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;

And the old Doge, who knew him doom'd, smiled
on him

With deadly cozenage, eight long months befo-
rehand —

Eight months of such hypocrisy as is

Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola

Is dead; so are young Foscari and his brethren —

I never *smiled* on *them*.

BARBARIGO.

Was Carmagnuola

Your friend?

LOREDANO.

He was the safeguard of the city.

In early life its foe, but in his manhood,

Its saviour first, then victim.

BARBARIGO.

Ah! that seems

The penalty of saying cities. He

* An historical fact.

Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to her sway.

LOREDANO.

The Romans (and we ape them) gave a crown
To him who took a city; and they gave
A crown to him, who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroy'd by him, or *through* him, the account
Were fearfully against him, although narrow'd
To private havoc, such as between him
And my dead father.

BARBARIGO.

Are you then thus fix'd?

LOREDANO.

Why, what should change me?

BARBARIGO.

That which changes me:
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplish'd, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depress'd,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep?

LOREDANO.

More soundly.

BARBARIGO.

That 's an error, and you 'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.

LOREDANO.

They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing
towards
The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

BARBARIGO.

Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.

Enter an Officer.

LOREDANO.

Where go you, sirrah?

OFFICER.

By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

BARBARIGO.

Their
Vault has been often open'd of late years.

LOREDANO.

'Twill be full soon, and may be closed for ever.

OFFICER.

May I pass on?

LOREDANO.

You may.

BARBARIGO.

How bears the Doge
This last calamity?

OFFICER.

With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the ad-
joining
Apartment, mutter forth the words — „My son!“
Scarce audibly. I must proceed.

(Exit Officer.)

BARBARIGO.

This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.

LOREDANO.

Right!

We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The Council's resolution.

BARBARIGO.

I protest
Against it at this moment.

LOREDANO.

As you please —
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.

Exeunt BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The DOGE's Apartment.

The DOGE and ATTENDANTS.

ATTENDANT.

My lord, the deputation is in waiting;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

DOGE.

To me all hours are like. Let them approach.
(*Exit Attendant.*)

AN OFFICER.

Prince! I have done your bidding.

DOGE.

What command?

OFFICER.

A melancholy one — to call the attendance
Of —

DOGE.

True — true —: I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old — old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin
To overtake me.

*Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of
the Signory, and the Chief of the Ten.*

Noble men, your pleasure!

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

In the first place, the Council doth condole
With the Doge on his late and private grief.

DOGE.

No more — no more of that.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect?

DOGE.

I do
Accept it as 'tis given — proceed.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

„The Ten,“

With a selected giunta from the senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the republic, and the o'erwhelming cares

Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this),
The resignation of the ducal ring,
Which you have worn so long and venerably;
And to prove that they are not ungrateful nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden
Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a sovereign's retreat.

DOGE.

Did I hear rightly?

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Need I say again?

DOGE.

No.—Have you done?

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

I have spoken. Twenty-four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

DOGE.

I shall not need so many seconds.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We

Will now retire.

DOGE.

Stay! Four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Speak!

DOGE.

When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me;
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more
Renew this instance. I have sworn to die
In full exertion of the functions, which
My country call'd me here to exercise,
According to my honour and my conscience —
I cannot break *my* oath.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Reduce us not
To the alternative of a decree,
Instead of your compliance.

DOGE.

Providence
Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me;
But ye have no right to reproach my length
Of days, since every hour has been the country's.
I am ready to lay down my life for her,
As I have laid down dearer things than life:
But for my dignity — I hold it of

The *whole* republic; when the *general* will
Is manifest, then you shall be answer'd.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot
Avail you aught.

DOGE.

I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance; no, not a moment.
What you decree — decree.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us?

DOGE.

You have heard me.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

With all due reverence we retire.

(Exeunt the Deputation, etc.)

Enter an Attendant.

ATTENDANT.

My lord,
The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

DOGE.

My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

MARINA.

My lord, if I intrude —
Perhaps you fain would be alone?

DOGE.

Alone!

Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

MARINA.

We will; and for the sake of those who are,
Endeavour — — Oh my husband!

DOGE.

Give it way;

I cannot comfort thee.

MARINA.

He might have lived,
So form'd for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

DOGE.

Or a prince's son.

MARINA.

Yes; all things which conduce to other men's

Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.
The country and the people whom he loved,
The prince of whom he was the elder born,
And —

DOGE.

Soon may be a prince no longer.

MARINA.

How?

DOGE.

They have taken my son from me, and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws!

MARINA.

Oh the tyrants!

In such an hour too!

DOGE.

'Tis the fittest time :
An hour ago I should have felt it.

MARINA.

And

Will you not now resent it? — Oh for vengeance!
But he, who, had he been enough protected,
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

DOGE.

Nor should do so
Against his country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that —

MARINA.

They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him* — how I loved
him!

I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is
gone,

And I, who would have given my blood for him,
Have nought to give but tears! But could I
compass

The retribution of his wrongs! — Well, well;
I have sons, who shall be men.

DOGE.

Your grief distracts you.

MARINA.

I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him
Bow'd down by such oppression; yes, I thought
That I would rather look upon his corse
Than his prolong'd captivity: — I am punish'd
For that thought now. Would I were in his
grave!

DOGE.

I must look on him once more.

MARINA.

Come with me!

DOGE.

Is he —

MARINA.

Our bridal bed is now his bier

DOGE.

And he is in his shroud?

MARINA.

Come, come, old man!

*(Exeunt the DOGE and MARINA.)**Enter BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.*BARBARIGO *(to an Attendant)*:

Where is the Doge?

ATTENDANT.

This instant retired hence
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

BARBARIGO.

Where?

ATTENDANT.

To the chamber where the body lies.

BARBARIGO

Let us return, then.

LOREDANO.

You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they 'll be here soon after us.

BARBARIGO.

And will they press their answer on the Doge?

LOREDANO.

'Twas his own wish that all should be done
promptly.

He answer'd quickly, and must so be answer'd;
His dignity is look'd to, his estate
Cared for — what would he more?

BARBARIGO.

Die in his robes.

He could not have lived long; but I have done
My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither?

LOREDANO.

'Twas fit that some one of such different thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
Should whisper that a harsh majority
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

BARBARIGO.

And not less, I must needs think, for the sake

Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
 You are ingenious, Loredano, in
 Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
 A very Ovid in the art of *hating*;
 'Tis thus (althoug a secondary object,
 Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you
 I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
 This undesired association in
 Your Giunta's duties.

LOREDANO.

How! — *my* Giunta!

BARBARIGO.

Yours!

They speak your language, watch your nod, ap-
 prove
 Your plans, and do your work. Are they not, *yours*?

LOREDANO.

Your talk unwarily. 'Twere best they hear not
 This from you.

BARBARIGO.

Oh! they 'll hear as much one day
 From louder tongues than mine; they have gone
 beyond
 Even their exorbitance of power: and when
 This happens in the most contemn'd and abject
 States, stung humanity will rise to check it.

LOREDANO.

You talk but idly.

BARBABIGO.

That remains for proof.

Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Is the Duke aware

We seek his presence?

ATTENDANT.

He shall be inform'd.

(Exit Attendant.)

BARBARIGO.

The Duke is with his son.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

If it be so,

We will remit him till the rites are over.

Let us return. 'Tis time enough to-morrow.

LOREDANO (*aside to BARBARIGO*).

Now the rich man's hell-fire upon your tongue,

Unquench'd unquenchable! I'll have it torn

From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter

Nothing but sobs through blood, for this! Sage

signors,

I pray ye be not hasty.

(Aloud to the others.)

BARBARIGO.

But be human!

LOREDANO.

See, the Duke comes!

Enter the DOGE.

DOGE.

I have obey'd your summons.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We come once more to urge our past request.

DOGE.

And I to answer.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

What?

DOGE.

My only answer.

You have heard it.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Hear *you* then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!To the point —
To the point! — I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts — Go on!

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

You are no longer Doge; you are released
From your imperial oath as sovereign;

Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the appanage
Already mention'd in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.

DOGE.

That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury,

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Your answer, Duke!

LOREDANO.

Your answer, Francis Foscari!

DOGE.

If I could have foreseen that my old age
Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being render'd, I obey.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

If you would have the three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

DOGE.

Not eight hours, signor,
 Nor even eight minutes. — There 's the ducal ring,
(Taking off his ring and cap.)
 And there the ducal diadem. And so
 The Adriatic 's free to wed another.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Yet go not forth so quickly.

DOGE.

I am old, sir,
 And even to move but slowly must begin
 To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
 A face I know not — Senator! your name,
 You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

MEMMO.

Signor,

I am the son of Marco Memmo.

DOGE.

Ah!

Your father was my friend. — But sons and fathers!
 What, ho! my servants there!

ATTENDANT.

My prince!

DOGE.

No prince —
 There are the princes of the prince! *(Pointing
 to the Ten's Deputation.)* — Prepare
 To part from hence upon the instant.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Why

So rashly? 'twill give scandal.

DOGE.

Answer that;

(To the Ten.)

It is your province.—Sirs, bestir yourselves:

(To the Servants.)

There is one burthen which I beg you bear
With care, although 'tis past all farther harm —
But I will look to that myself.

BARBARIGO.

He means

The body of his son.

DOGE.

And call Marina,

My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

DOGE.

Get thee ready, we must mourn

Elsewhere.

MARINA.

And every where.

DOGE.

True; but in freedom,
Without these jealous spies upon the great.

Signors, you may depart: what would you more?
We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes.
Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good signors!
May the next duke be better than the present!

LOREDANO.

The *present* duke is Paschal Malipiero.

DOGE.

Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.

LOREDANO.

Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.

DOGE.

Earth and heaven!

Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
Live to hear this! — the first doge who e'er heard
Such sound for his successor! Happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero —
This insult at the least was spared him.

LOREDANO.

What

Do you regret a traitor?

DOGE.

No — I merely

Envy the dead.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

My lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the state's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you
towards

The landing-place of the canal.

DOGE.

No. I

Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty — the Giant's Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested duke.

My services have call'd me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.

There five and thirty years ago was I

Install'd, and traversed these same halls from which
I never thought to be divorced except

A corse — a corse, it might be, fighting for them —
But not push'd hence by fellow citizens.

But, come; my son and I will go together —

He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

What thus in public?

DOGE.

I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?

MARINA.

Here's my arm!

DOGE.

And here my *staff*: thus propp'd will I go forth.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

It must not be — the people will perceive it.

DOGE.

The people! — There's no people, you well know it,
Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor
curse you,
Save with their hearts and eyes.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

You speak in passion,
Else —

DOGE.

You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows that I approach

A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!

BARBARIGO.

You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect,
The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?

DIFFERENT VOICES.

Ay!— Ay!

DOGE.

You shall not
Stir — in my train; at least. I enter'd here
As sovereign — I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.
Pomp is for princes — I am *none*! — That's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates. — Ah!

LOREDANO.

Hark!

(*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*)

BARBARIGO.

The bell!

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

St. Mark's, which tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.

DOGE.

Well I recognize
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I *was* not young.

BARBARIGO.

Sit down, my lord!
You tremble.

DOGE.

'Tis the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

BARBARIGO.

I pray you sit.

DOGE.

No; my seat here has been a throne till now.
Marina! let us go.

MARINA.

Most readily.

DOGE (*walks a few steps, then stops*).

I feel athirst — will no one bring me here
A cup of water?

BARBARIGO.

I —

MARINA.

And I —

LOREDANO.

And I —

(The DOGE takes a goblet from the hand of Loredano.)

DOGE.

I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.

LOREDANO.

Why so?

DOGE.

'Tis said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

LOREDANO.

Well, sir!

DOGE.

Then it is false, or you are true.

For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

MARINA

You talk wildly; and
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as look'd my husband!

BARBARIGO.

He sinks! — support him! — quick — a chair —
support him!

DOGE.

The bell tolls on! — let 's hence — my brain's
on fire!

BARBARIGO.

I do beseech you, lean upon us!

DOGE.

No!

A sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!
Off with your arms! — *That bell!*

(The DOGE drops down and dies.)

MARINA.

My God! My God!

BARBARIGO (to LOREDANO).

Behold! your work's completed!

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Is there then

No aid? Call in assistance!

ATTENDANT.

'Tis all over.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

If it be so; at least his obsequies
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?

BARBARIGO.

He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reign'd: then let his funeral rites be princely.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We are agreed then?

All, except LOREDANO, answer

Yes.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Heaven's peace be with him!

MARINA.

Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory),
You banish'd from his palace, and tore down
From his high place, with such relentless coldness;
And now when he can neither know these honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled.
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

MARINA.

I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt), consign'd to powers
which may
Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly shorten'd:
It is my last of duties, and may prove
A dreary comfort in my desolation.
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Do you
Pretend still to this office?

MARINA.

I do, signor.
Though his possessions have been all consumed
In the state's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of — *(She stops with agitation.)*

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Best retain it for your children.

MARINA.

Ay, they are fatherless, I thank you.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We
 Cannot comply with your request. His relics
 Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and follow'd
 Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
 As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.

MARINA.

I have heard of murderers, who have interr'd
 Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
 Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
 O'er those they slew. I've heard of widows' tears —
 Alas! I have shed some — always thanks to you!
 I've heard of *heirs* in sables — you have left none
 To the deceased, so you would act the part
 Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day,
 I trust, Heaven's will be done too!

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

Know you, lady,
 To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?

MARINA.

I know the former better than yourselves;
 The latter — like yourselves; and can face both.
 Wish you more funerals?

BARBARIGO.

Heed not her rash words;
 Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

We will not note them down.

BARBARIGO (*turning to LOREDANO, who is writing upon his tablets*).

What art thou writing,
With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?

LOREDANO (*pointing to the DOGE's body*).
That *he* has paid me!*

CHIEF OF THE TEN.

What debt did he owe you?

LOREDANO.

A long and just one; Nature's debt and *mine*.

(*Curtain falls.*)

* *L'ha pagata.*“ An historical fact. See the History of Venice, by P. Daru, page 411, vol. 2d.

A P P E N D I X.

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A P P E N D I X.

EXTRACT DE L'HISTOIRE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE VENISE PAR P. DARU DE L'ACADÉMIE FRAN- ÇAISE. TOM. II.

Depuis trente ans, la république n'avait pas déposé les armes. Elle avait acquis les provinces de Brescia, de Bergame, de Crème, et la principauté de Ravenne.

Mais ces guerres continuelles faisaient beaucoup de malheureux et de mecontents. Le doge François Foscari, à qui on ne pouvait pardonner d'en avoir été le promoteur, manifesta une seconde fois, en 1442, et probablement avec plus de sincérité que la première, l'intention d'abdiquer sa dignité. Le conseil s'y refusa encore. On avait exigé de lui le serment de ne plus quitter de dogat. Il était déjà avancé dans la vieillesse, conservant cependant beaucoup de force de tête et de caractère, et jouissant de la gloire d'avoir vu la république étendre au loin les limites de ses domaines pendant son administration.

Au milieu de ces prospérités, de grands chagrins vinrent mettre à l'épreuve la fermeté de son ame.

Son fils, Jacques Foscari, fut accusé, en 1445, d'avoir reçu des présents de quelques princes ou seigneurs étrangers, notamment, disait-on, du duc de Milan, Philippe Visconti. C'était non-seulement une bassesse, mais une infraction des lois positives de la république.

Le conseil des dix traita cette affaire comme s'il se fut agi d'un délit commis par un particulier obscur. L'accusé fut amené devant ses juges, devant le doge, qui ne crut pas pouvoir s'abstenir de présider le tribunal. Là, il fut interrogé, appliqué à la question,* déclaré coupable, et il entendit, de la bouche de son père, l'arrêt qui le condamnait à un bannissement perpétuel, et le réléguait à Naples de Romanie, pour y finir ses jours.

Embarqué sur une galère pour se rendre au lieu de son exil, il tomba malade à Trieste. Les sollicitations du doge obtinrent, non sans difficulté, qu'on lui assignât une autre résidence. Enfin le conseil des dix lui permit de se retirer à Trévise, en lui imposant l'obligation d'y rester sous peine de mort, et de se présenter tous les jours devant le gouverneur.

Il y était depuis cinq ans, lorsqu'un des chefs du conseil des dix fut assassiné. Les soupçons se portèrent sur lui: un de ses domestiques qu'on

* E datagli la corda per avere da lui la verità; chiamato il consiglio de dieci colla giunta, nel quale fù messer lo doge, fù sentenziato (Marin Sanuto Vite de' Duchi, F. Foscari.)

avait vu à Venise fut arrêté et subit la torture. Les bourreaux ne purent lui arracher aucun aveu. Ce terrible tribunal se fit amener le maître, le soumit aux mêmes épreuves; il résista à tous les tourments, ne cessant d'attester son innocence*; mais on ne vit dans cette constance que de l'obstination de ce qu'il taisait le fait, on conclut que ce fait existait; on attribua sa fermeté à la magie, et on le relégua à la Canée. De cette terre

* E fù tormentato nè mai confessò cosa alcuna, pure parve al consiglio de' dieci di confinarlo in vita alla Canea (Ibid.) Voici le texte du jugement: „Cum Jacobus Foscari per occasionem percussione et mortis Hermolai Donati fuit retentus et examinatus, et propter significationes, testificationes, et scripturas quae habentur contra eum, clare apparet ipsum esse reum criminis praedicti, sed propter incantationes et verba quae sibi reperta sunt, de quibus existit indictia manifesta, videtur propter obstinatum mentem suam, non esse possibile extrahere ab ipso illam veritatem, quae clara est per scripturas et per testificationes, quoniam in fume aliquam nec vocem, nec gemitum, sed solum intra dentes voces ipse videtur et auditur infra se loqui, etc. . . . Tamen non est standum in istis terminis, propter honorem statûs nostri et pro multis respectibus, praesertim quod regimen nostrum occupatur in hac re et qui interdictum est amplius progredere: vadit pars quod dictus Jacobus Foscari, propter ea quae habentur de illo, mittatur in confinium in civitate Caneae, etc. Notice sur le procès de Jacques Foscari dans un volume, intitulé, Raccolta di memorie storiche e annedote, per formar la Storia dell' excellentissimo consiglio di X della sua prima iustituzione sino a' giorni nostri, con le diverse variazioni e riforme nelle varie epoche successe. (Archives de Venice.)

lointaine, le banni, digne alors de quelque pitié, ne cessait d'écrire à son père, à ses amis, pour obtenir quelque adoucissement à sa déportation. N'obtenant rien et sachant que la terreur qu'inspirait le conseil des dix ne lui permettait pas d'espérer de trouver dans Venise une seule voix qui s'élevât en sa faveur; il fit une lettre pour le nouveau duc de Milan, par laquelle, au nom des bons offices que Sforce avait reçus du chef de la république, il implorait son intervention en faveur d'un innocent, du fils du doge.

Cette lettre, selon quelques historiens, fut confiée à un marchand, qui avait promis de la faire parvenir au duc; mais qui, trop averti de ce qu'il avait à craindre en se rendant l'intermédiaire d'une pareille correspondance, se hâta, en débarquant à Venise, de la remettre au chef du tribunal. Une autre version, qui paraît plus sûre, rapporte que la lettre fut surprise par un espion, attaché au pas de l'exilé*.

Ce fut un nouveau délit dont on eut à punir Jacques Foscari. Réclamer la protection d'un prince étranger était un crime, dans un sujet de la république. Une galère partit sur le-champ pour l'amener dans les prisons de Venise. A son arrivée il fut soumis à l'estrapade**. C'était une singulière destinée, pour le citoyen d'une république et pour le fils d'un prince, d'être trois fois dans sa vie

* La notice citée ci-dessus qui rapporte les actes de cette procédure.

** Ebbe prima per sapere la verità trenta squassi di corda. (Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi. F. Foscari.)

appliqué à la question. Cette fois la torture était d'autant plus odieuse, qu'elle n'avait point d'objet, le fait qu'on avait à lui reprocher, étant incontestable.

Quand on demanda à l'accusée, dans les intervalles que les bourreaux lui accordaient, pourquoi il avait écrit la lettre qu'on lui produisait, il répondit que c'était précisément parce qu'il ne doutait pas qu'elle ne tombât entre les mains du tribunal, que toute autre voie lui avait été fermée pour faire parvenir ses réclamations, qu'il s'attendait bien qu'on le ferait amener à Venise; mais qu'il avait tout risqué pour avoir la consolation de voir sa femme, son père, et sa mère encore une fois.

Sur cette naïve déclaration, on confirma sa sentence d'exil; mais on l'aggrava, en y ajoutant qu'il serait retenue en prison pendant un an. Cette rigueur, dont on usait envers un malheureux, était sans doute odieuse; mais cette politique, qui défendait à tous les citoyens de faire intervenir les étrangers dans les affaires intérieures de la république, était sage. Elle était chez eux une maxime de gouvernement et une maxime inflexible. L'historien Paul Morosini *, a conté que l'empereur Frédéric III, pendant qu'il était l'hôte des Vénitiens, demanda comme une faveur particulière, l'admission d'un citoyen dans le grand conseil, et la grace d'un ancien gouverneur de Candie, gendre du doge et banni pour sa mauvaise administration, sans pouvoir obtenir ni l'une ni l'autre.

* *Historia di Venezia*, lib. 23.

Cependant, on ne put refuser au condamné la permission de voir sa femme, ses enfants, ses parents, qu'il allait quitter pour toujours. Cette dernière entrevue même fut accompagnée de cruauté, par la sévère circonspection, qui retenait les épanchements de la douleur paternelle et conjugale. Ce ne fut point dans l'intérieur de leur appartement, ce fut dans une des grandes salles du palais, qu'une femme, accompagnée de ses quatre fils, vint faire les derniers adieux à son mari, qu'un père octogénaire et la dogaresse accablée d'infirmités, jouirent un moment de la triste consolation de mêler leurs larmes à celles de leur exilé. Il se jeta à leurs genoux en leur tendant des mains disloquées par la torture, pour les supplier de solliciter quelque adoucissement à la sentence qui venait d'être prononcée contre lui. Son père eut le courage de lui répondre; „Non, mon fils, respectez votre arrêt, et obéissez sans murmure à la seigneurie*.“ A ces mots il se sépara de l'infortuné, qui fut sur-le-champ embarqué pour Candie.

L'antiquité vit avec autant d'horreur que d'admiration un père condamnant ses fils évidemment coupables. Elle hésita pour qualifier de vertu sub-

* Marin Sanuto, dans sa chronique, *Vite de' Duchi*, se sert ici sans en avoir eu l'intention d'une expression assez énergique: „Il doge era vecchio in decrepita età e caminava con una mazzetta: E quando gli andò parlogli molto costantemente che pareva che non fosse suo figliuolo, licet fosse figliuolo unico, e Jacopo disse, messer padre, vi prego che procuriate per me, acciocchè io torni a casa mia. Il doge disse: Jacopo, va e obbedisei a quello che vuole la terra, e non cercar più oltre.“

lime ou de férocité cet effort qui paraît au-dessus de la nature humaine* ; mais ici, où la première faute n'était qu'une faiblesse, où la seconde n'était pas prouvée, où la troisième n'avait rien de criminel, comment concevoir la constance d'un père, qui voit torturer trois fois son fils unique, qui l'entend condamner sans preuves et qui n'éclate pas en plaintes ; qui ne l'aborde que pour lui montrer un visage plus austère qu'attendri, et qui, au moment de s'en séparer pour jamais, lui inderdit les murmures et jusqu'à l'espérance ? Comment expliquer une si cruelle circonspection, si ce n'est en avouant, à notre honte, que la tyrannie peut obtenir de l'espèce humaine les mêmes efforts que la vertu ? La servitude aurait-elle son héroïsme comme la liberté ?

Quelque temps après ce jugement, on découvrit le véritable auteur de l'assassinat, dont Jacques Foscari portait la peine ; mais il n'était plus temps de réparer cette atroce injustice, le malheureux était mort dans sa prison.

* Cela fut un acte que l'on ne sauroit ni suffisamment louer, ni assez blâmer : car, ou c'étoit une excellence de vertu, qui rendoit ainsi son cœur impassible, ou une violence de passion qui le rendoit insensible, dont ni l'une ni l'autre n'est chose petite, ainsi surpassant l'ordinaire d'humaine nature et tenant ou de la divinité ou de la bestialité. Mais il est plus raisonnable que le jugement des hommes s'accorde à sa gloire, que la foiblesse des jugeans fasse croire sa vertu. Mais pour lors quand il se fut retiré, tout le monde demeura sur la place, comme transi d'horreur et de frayeur, pour long temps sans mot dire, pour avoir vu ce qui avait été fait. (Plutarque, Valerius Publicola.)

Il me reste à raconter la suite des malheurs du père. L'histoire les attribue à l'impatience qu'avaient ses ennemis et ses rivaux de voir vaquer sa place. Elle accuse formellement Jacques Loredan, l'un des chefs du conseil des dix, de s'être livré contre ce vieillard aux conseils d'un haine héréditaire, et qui depuis long-temps divisait leurs maisons *.

François Foscari avait essayé de la faire cesser, en offrant sa fille à l'illustre amiral Pierre Loredan, pour un de ses fils. L'alliance avait été rejetée, et l'inimitié des deux familles s'en était accrue. Dans tous les conseils, dans toutes les affaires, le doge trouvait toujours les Loredan prêts à combattre ses propositions ou ses intérêts. Il lui échappa un jour de dire qu'il ne se croirait réellement prince, que lorsque Pierre Loredan aurait cessé de vivre. Cet amiral mourut quelque temps après d'une incommodité assez prompte qu'on ne put expliquer. Il n'en fallut pas davantage aux malveillants pour insinuer que François Foscari, ayant désiré cette mort, pouvait bien l'avoir hâtée.

Ces bruits s'accréditèrent encore lorsqu'on vit aussi périr subitement Marc Loredan, frère de Pierre, et cela dans le moment où, en sa qualité d'avogador, il instruisait un procès contre André Donato, gendre du doge, accusé de péculat. On

* Je suis principalement dans ce récit une relation manuscrite de la déposition de François Foscari qui est dans le volume intitulé, *Raccolta di memorie storiche e annedote, per formar la Storia dell'eccellentissimo consilio di X.* (Archives de Venise.)

écrivit sur la tombe de l'amiral qu'il avait été enlevé à la patrie par le poison.

Il n'y avait aucune preuve, aucun indice contre François Foscari, aucune raison même de le soupçonner. Quand sa vie entière n'aurait pas démenti une imputation aussi odieuse, il savait que son rang ne lui promettait ni l'impunité ni même l'indulgence. La mort tragique de l'un de ses prédécesseurs l'en avertissait, et il n'avait que trop d'exemples domestiques du soin que le conseil des dix prenait d'humilier le chef de la république.

Cependant, Jacques Loredan, fils de Pierre, croyait ou feignait de croire avoir à venger les pertes de sa famille*. Dans ses livres de somptes (car il faisait le commerce, comme à cette époque presque tous les patriciens,) il avait inscrit de sa propre main le doge au nombre de ses débiteurs, pour la mort, y était-il dit, de mon père et de mon oncle **. De l'autre côté du registre, il avait laissé une page en blanc, pour y faire mention du recouvrement de cette dette, et en effet, après la perte du doge, il écrivit sur son registre: il me l'a payée, l'ha pagata.

Jacques Loredan fut élu membre du conseil des dix, en devint un des trois chefs, et se promit

* Hasce tamen injurias quamvis imaginarias non tam ad animum revocaverat Jacobus Lauredanus defunctorum nepos, quam in abecedarium vindictam opportuna. (Palazzi Fasti Ducales.)

** Ibid. et l'Histoire Venitienne de Vianolo.

bien de profiter de cette occasion pour accomplir la vengeance qu'il méditait.

Le doge en sortant de la terrible épreuve qu'il venait de subir, pendant le procès de son fils, s'était retiré au fond de son palais, incapable de se livrer aux affaires, consumé de chagrins, accablé de vieillesse, il ne se montrait plus en public, ni même dans les conseils. Cette retraite, si facile à expliquer dans un vieillard octogénaire si malheureux, déplut aux decemvirs, qui voulurent y voir un murmure contre leur arrêts.

Loredan commença par se plaindre devant ses collègues du tort que les infirmités du doge, son absence des conseils, apportaient à l'expédition des affaires, il finit par hasarder et réussit à faire agréer la proposition de le déposer. Ce n'était pas la première fois que Venise avait pour prince un homme dans la caducité; l'usage et les lois y avaient pourvu; dans ces circonstances le doge était suppléé par le plus ancien du conseil. Ici, cela ne suffisait pas aux ennemis de Foscari. Pour donner plus de solennité à la délibération, le conseil des dix demanda une adjonction de vingt-cinq sénateurs; mais comme on n'en énonçait pas l'objet, et que le grand conseil était loin de le soupçonner, il se trouva que Marc Foscari, frère du doge, leur fut donné pour l'un des adjoints. Au lieu de l'admettre à la délibération, ou de réclamer contre ce choix, on enferma ce sénateur dans une chambre séparée, et on lui fit jurer de ne jamais parler de cette exclusion qu'il éprouvait, en lui déclarant qu'il y allait de sa vie; ce qui n'empêcha pas qu'on

n'inscrivît son nom au bas du décret comme s'il y eût pris part *.

Quand on en vint à la délibération. Loredan la provoqua en ces termes **. „ Si l'utilité publique „ doit imposer silence à tous les intérêts privés, je „ ne doute pas que nous ne prenions aujourd'hui „ une mesure que la patrie réclame que nous lui „ devons. Les états ne peuvent se maintenir dans „ un ordre de choses immuable : vous n'avez qu'à „ voir comme le nôtre est changé, et combien il „ le serait davantage s'il n'y avait une autorité as- „ sez ferme pour y porter remède. J'ai honte de „ vous faire remarquer la confusion qui règne dans „ les conseils, le désordre des délibérations, l'en- „ combrement des affaires, et la légèreté avec la- „ quelle les plus importantes sont décidées ; la li- „ cence de notre jeunesse, le peu d'assiduité des „ magistrats, l'introduction de nouveautés dangereu- „ ses. Quel est l'effect de ces désordres ? de com- „ promettre notre considération. Quelle en est la „ cause ? l'absence d'un chef capable de modérer „ les uns, de diriger les autres, de donner l'exem- „ ple à tous, et de maintenir la force des lois.

„ Où est le temps où nos décrets étaient aus- „ sitôt exécutés que rendus ? Où François Carrare „ se trouvait investi dans Padoue, avant de pou- „ voir être seulement informé que nous voulions „ lui faire la guerre ? nous avons vu tout le con-

* Il faut cependant remarquer que dans la notice où l'on raconte ce fait, la délibération est rapportée, que les vingt-cinq adjoints y sont nommés, et que le nom de Marc Foscari ne s'y trouve pas.

** Cette harangue se lit dans la notice citée ci-dessus.

„ traire dans la dernière guerre contre le duc de
„ Milan. Malheureuse la république qui est sans
„ chef!

„ Je ne vous rappelle pas tous ces inconvénients
„ et leurs suites déplorables, pour vous affliger,
„ pour vous effrayer, mais pour vous faire souve-
„ nir que vous êtes les maîtres, les conservateurs
„ de cet état, fondé par vos pères, et de la li-
„ berté que nous devons à leurs travaux, à leurs
„ institutions. Ici, le mal indique le remède. Nous
„ n'avons point de chef, il nous en faut un. Notre
„ prince est notre ouvrage, nous avons donc le
„ droit de juger son mérite quand il s'agit de l'é-
„ lire, et son incapacité quand elle se manifeste.
„ J'ajouterai que le peuple, encore bien qu'il n'ait
„ pas le droit de prononcer sur les actions de ses
„ maîtres, apprendra ce changement avec transport.
„ C'est la providence, je n'en doute pas, qui lui
„ inspire elle-même ces dispositions, pour vous
„ avertir que la république réclame cette résolution,
„ et que le sort de l'état est en vos mains.“

Ce discours n'éprouva que de timides contra-
dictions; cependant, la délibération dura huit jours.
L'assemblée, ne se jugeant pas aussi sûre de l'ap-
probation universelle que l'orateur voulait le lui
faire croire, désirait que le doge donnât lui-même
sa démission. Il avait déjà proposée deux fois, et
on n'avait pas voulu l'accepter.

Aucune loi ne portait que le prince fut révo-
cable: il était au contraire à vie, et les exemples
qu'on pouvait citer de plusieurs doges déposés,
prouvaient que de telles révolutions avaient tou-
jours été le résultat d'un mouvement populaire.

Mais d'ailleurs, si le doge pouvait être déposé, ce n'était pas assurément par un tribunal composé d'un petit nombre de membres, institué pour punir les crimes, et nullement investi du droit de révoquer ce que le corps souverain de l'état avait fait.

Cependant, le tribunal arrêta que les six conseillers de la seigneurie, et les chefs du conseil des dix, se transporteraient auprès du doge pour lui signifier, que l'excellentissime conseil avait jugé convenable qu'il abdiquât une dignité, dont son âge ne lui permettait plus de remplir les fonctions. On lui donnait 1500 ducats d'or pour son entretien et vingt-quatre heures pour se décider*.

Foscari répondit sur-le-champ avec beaucoup de gravité, que deux fois il avait voulu se démettre de sa charge; qu'au lieu de le lui permettre, on avait exigé de lui le serment de ne plus réitérer cette demande; que la providence avait prolongé ses jours pour l'éprouver et pour l'affliger, que cependant on n'était pas en droit de reprocher sa longue vie à un homme qui avait employé quatre-vingt-quatre ans au service de la république; qu'il était prêt encore à lui sacrifier sa vie; mais que, pour sa dignité, il la tenait de la république entière, et qu'il se réservait de répondre sur ce sujet, quand la volonté générale se serait légalement manifestée.

Le lendemain, à l'heure indiquée, les conseillers et les chefs des dix se présentèrent. Il ne voulut pas leur donner d'autre réponse. Le conseil s'assembla sur-le-champ, lui envoya demander

* Ce Décret est rapporté textuellement dans la notice.

encore, une fois sa résolution, séance tenante, et, la réponse ayant été la même, on prononça que le doge était relevé de son serment et déposé de sa dignité, on lui assignait une pension de 1500 ducats d'or, en lui enjoignant de sortir du palais dans huit jours, sous peine de voir tous ses biens confisqués *.

Le lendemain, ce décret fut porté au doge, et ce fut Jacques Loredan qui eut la cruelle joie de le lui présenter. Il répondit: „Si j'avais pu prévoir „que ma vieillesse fut préjudiciable à l'état, le „chef de la république ne se serai pas montré assez ingrat, pour préférer sa dignité à la patrie; „mais cette vie lui ayant été utile pendant tant „d'années, je voulais lui en consacrer jusqu'au dernier moment. Le décret est rendu, je m'y conformerai.“ Après avoir parlé ainsi, il se dépouilla des marques de sa dignité, remit l'anneau ducal qui fut brisé en sa présence, et dès le jour suivant il quitta ce palais, qu'il avait habité pendant trente-cinq ans, accompagné de son frère, de ses parents, et de ses amis. Un secrétaire, qui se trouva sur le perron, l'invita à descendre par un escalier dérobé, afin d'éviter la foule du peuple, qui s'était rassemblé dans les cours, mais il s'y refusa, disant qu'il voulait descendre par où il était monté; et quand il fut au bas de l'escalier des géants, il se retourna, appuyé sur sa béquille, vers le palais en proférant ces paroles: „Mes services m'y avaient appelé, la malice de mes ennemis m'en fait sortir.“

La foule qui s'ouvrait sur son passage, et qui

* La notice rapporte aussi ce décret.

avait peut-être désiré sa mort, était émue de respect et d'attendrissement*. Rentré dans sa maison, il recommanda à sa famille d'oublier les injures de ses ennemis. Personne dans les divers corps de l'état ne se crut en droit de s'étonner, qu'un prince inamovible eût été déposé sans qu'on lui reprochât rien; que l'état eût perdu son chef, à l'insu du sénat et du corps souverain lui-même. Le peuple seul laissa échapper quelques regrets: une proclamation du conseil des dix prescrivit le silence le plus absolu sur cette affaire, sous peine de mort.

Avant de donner un successeur à François Foscari, une nouvelle loi fut rendue, qui défendait au doge d'ouvrir et de lire, autrement qu'en présence de ses conseillers, les dépêches des ambassadeurs de la république, et les lettres des princes étrangers**.

Les électeurs entrèrent au conclave et nommèrent au dogat Paschal Malipier le 30 Octobre, 1457. La cloche de Saint-Marc, qui annonçait à Vénise son nouveau prince, vint frapper l'oreille de François Foscari; cette fois sa fermeté l'abandonna, il éprouva un tel saisissement, qu'il mourut le lendemain***.

La république arrêta qu'on lui rendrait les mêmes honneurs funèbres que s'il fut mort dans l'ex-

* On lit dans la notice ces propres mots: „Se fosse stato in loro potere volontieri lo avrebbero restituito.“

** Hist. di Venetia, di Paolo Morosini, lib. 24.

*** Hist. di Pietro Justiniani, lib. 8.

exercice de sa dignité; mais lorsqu'on se présenta pour enlever ses restes, sa veuve, qui de son nom était Marine Nani, déclara qu'elle ne le souffrirait point; qu'on ne devait pas traiter en prince après sa mort celui que vivant on avait dépouillé de la couronne, et que, puisqu'il avait consumé ses biens au service de l'état, elle saurait consacrer sa dot à lui faire rendre les derniers honneurs *. On ne tint aucun compte de cette résistance, et malgré les protestations de l'ancienne dogaresse, le corps fut enlevé, revêtu des ornements ducaux, exposé en public, et les obsèques furent célébrées avec la pompe accoutumée. Le nouveau doge assista au convoi en robe de sénateur.

La pitié qu'avait inspirée le malheur de ce vieillard, ne fut pas tout-à-fait stérile. Un an après, on osa dire que le conseil de dix avait outrepassé ses pouvoirs, et il lui fut défendu par une loi du grand conseil de s'ingérer à l'avenir de juger le prince, à moins que ce ne fut pour cause de félonie **.

Un acte d'autorité tel que la déposition d'un doge inamovible de sa nature, aurait pu exciter un soulèvement général, ou au moins occasionner une division dans une république autrement constituée que Venise. Mais depuis trois ans, il existait dans celle-ci une magistrature, ou plutôt une autorité, devant laquelle tout devait se taire.

* Hist. d'Egnatio, liv. 6. cap. 7.

**) Ce décret est du 25 Octobre, 1458. La notice le rapporte.

EXTRAIT DE L'HISTOIRE DES REPUBLICUES ITALIENNES DU MOYEN AGE. PAR I. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI. TOM. X.

Le Doge de Venise, qui avait prévenu par ce traité une guerre non moins dangereuse que celle qu'il avait terminée presque en même temps par le traité de Lodi, était alors parvenu à une extrême vieillesse. François Foscari occupait cette première dignité de l'état dès le 15 Avril, 1423. Quoiqu'il fut déjà âgé de plus de cinquante-un ans à l'époque de son election, il était cependant le plus jeune des quarante-un électeurs. Il avait eu beaucoup de peine à parvenir au rang qu'il convoitait, et son election avait été conduite avec beaucoup d'adresse. Pendant plusieurs tours de scrutin ses amis les plus zélés s'étaient abstenus de lui donner leur suffrage, pour que les autres ne le considérassent pas comme un concurrent redoutable*. Le conseil des dix craignait son crédit parmi la noblesse pauvre, parce qu'il avait cherché à se la rendre favorable, tandis qu'il était procureur de Saint-Marc, en faisant employer plus de trente mille ducats à doter des jeunes filles de bonne maison, ou à établir de jeunes gentilshommes. On craignoit encore sa nombreuse famille, car alors il était père de quatre enfans, et marié de nouveau; enfin on redoutait son ambition et son goût pour la guerre. L'opinion que ses adversaires s'étaient formée de lui fut vérifiée par les événemens; pendant trente-

* Marin Sanuto, *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, p. 967.

quatre ans que Foscari fut à la tête de la république, elle ne cessa point de combattre. Si les hostilités étaient suspendues durant quelques mois, c'était pour recommencer bientôt avec plus de vigueur. Ce fut l'époque où Venise étendit son empire sur Brescia, Bergame, Ravenne, et Crôme; où elle fonda sa domination de Lombardie, et parut sans cesse sur le point d'asservir toute cette province. Profond, courageux, inébranlable, Foscari communiqua aux conseils son propre caractère, et ses talents lui firent obtenir plus d'influence sur la république, que n'avaient exercé la plupart de ses prédécesseurs. Mais si son ambition avait eu pour but l'agrandissement de sa famille, elle fut cruellement trompée: trois de ses fils moururent dans les huit années qui suivirent son election; le quatrième, Jacob, par lequel la maison Foscari s'est perpétuée, fut victime de la jalousie du conseil des dix, et empoisonna par ses malheurs les jours de son père.*

En effet, le conseil des dix, redoublant de défiance envers le chef de l'état, lorsqu'il le voyoit plus fort par ses talens et sa popularité, veilloit sans cesse sur Foscari, pour le punir de son crédit et de sa gloire. Au mois de Février 1445, Michel, Bevilaqua, Florentin, exilé à Venise, accusa en secret Jacques Foscari auprès des inquisiteurs d'état, d'avoir reçu du duc Philippe Visconti, des présens d'argent et de joyaux, par les mains des gens de sa maison. Telle était l'odieuse procédure adoptée à Venise, que sur cette accusation secrète, le fils du doge, du représentant de la majesté de la république, fut mis à la torture. On lui arracha par

* Marin Sanuto, *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, p. 968.

l'estrapade l'aveu des charges portées contre lui ; il fut relégué pour le reste de ses jours à Napoli de Romanie, avec obligation de se présenter chaque matin au commandant de la place*. Cependant, le vaisseau qui le portait ayant touché à Trieste, Jacob, grièvement malade des suites de la torture, et plus encore de l'humiliation qu'il avait éprouvée, demanda en grâce au conseil des dix de n'être pas envoyé plus loin. Il obtint cette faveur, par une délibération du 28 Décembre, 1446 ; il fut rappelé à Trévise et il eut la liberté d'habiter tout le Trévisan indifféremment**.

Il vivait en paix à Trévise ; et la fille de Léonard Contarini, qu'il avait épousée le 10 Février, 1441, était venue le joindre dans son exil, lorsque le 5 Novembre, 1450, Almorò Donato, chef du conseil des dix, fut assassiné. Les deux autres inquisiteurs d'état, Triadano Gritti et Antonio Venieri, portèrent leurs soupçons sur Jacob Foscari, parce-qu'un domestique à lui, nommé Olivier, avait été vu ce soir-là même à Venise, et avait des premiers donné la nouvelle de cet assassinat. Olivier fut mis à la torture, mais il nia jusqu'à la fin, avec un courage inébranlable, le crime dont on l'accusait, quoique ses juges eussent la barbarie de lui faire donner jusqu'à quatre-vingts tours d'estrapade. Cependant, comme Jacob Foscari avait de puissans motifs d'inimitié contre le conseil des dix qui l'avait condamné, et qui témoignait de la haine au doge son père, on essaya de mettre à son tour Jacob à la torture, et l'on prolongea contre lui

* Marin Saunto, p. 968.

** Ibid. Vite, p. 1123.

ces affreux tourments, sans réussir à en tirer aucune confession. Malgré sa dénégation, le conseil des dix le condamna à être transporté à la Canée, et accorda une récompense à son délateur. Mais les horribles douleurs que Jacob Foscari avait éprouvées, avaient troublé sa raison, ses persécuteurs, touchés de ce dernier malheur, permirent qu'on le ramenât à Venise le 26 Mai, 1451. Il embrassa son père, il puisa dans ses exhortations quelque courage et quelque calme, et il fut reconduit immédiatement à la Canée*. Sur ces entrefaites, Nicolas Erizzo, homme déjà noté pour un précédent crime, confessa, en mourant, que c'était lui qui avait tué Almorò Donato**.

Le malheureux doge, François Foscari, avait déjà cherché à plusieurs reprises, à abdiquer une dignité si funeste à lui-même et à sa famille. Il lui semblait que, redescendant au rang de simple citoyen, comme il n'inspirerait plus de crainte ou de jalousie, on n'accablerait plus son fils par ces effroyables persécutions. Abattu par la mort de ses premiers enfans, il avait voulu, dès le 26 Juin, 1433, déposer une dignité, durant l'exercice de laquelle sa patrie avait été tourmentée par la guerre, par la peste, et par des malheurs de tout genre***. Il renouvela cette proposition après les jugemens rendus contre son fils; mais le conseil des dix le retenait forcément sur le trône, comme il retenait son fils dans les fers.

* Marin Sanuto, p. 1138.—M. Ant. Sabellico. Deca III. L. VI. f. 187.

** Ibid. p. 1139.

*** Ibid. p. 1032.

En vain Jacob Foscari, obligé de se présenter chaque jour au gouverneur de la Canée, réclamait contre l'injustice de sa dernière sentence, sur laquelle la confession d'Erizzo ne laissait plus de doutes. En vain il demandait grâce au farouche conseil des dix; il ne pouvait obtenir aucune réponse. Le désir de revoir son père et sa mère, arrivés tous deux au dernier terme de la vieillesse, le désir de revoir une patrie dont la cruauté ne méritait pas un si tendre amour, se changèrent en lui en une vraie fureur. Ne pouvant retourner à Venise pour y vivre libre, il voulut du moins y aller chercher un supplice. Il écrivit au duc de Milan à la fin de Mai, 1456, pour implorer sa protection auprès du sénat: et sachant qu'une telle lettre seroit considérée comme un crime, il l'exposa lui-même dans un lieu où il étoit sûr qu'elle seroit saisie par les espions qui l'entouraient. En effet, la lettre étant déférée au conseil des dix, on l'envoya chercher aussitôt, et il fut reconduit à Venise le 19 Juillet, 1456. *

Jacob Foscari ne nia point sa lettre, il raconta en même temps dans quel but il l'avait écrite, et comment il l'avait fait tomber entre les mains de son délateur. Malgré ces aveux, Foscari fut remis à la torture, et on lui donna trente tours d'estrapade, pour voir s'il confirmerait ensuite ses dépositions. Quand on le détacha de la corde, on le trouva déchiré par ces horribles secousses. Les juges permirent alors à son père, à sa mère, à sa femme, et à ses fils, d'aller le voir dans sa prison. Le vieux Foscari,

* Marin Sanuto, p. 1162.

appuyé sur un bâton, ne se traîna qu'avec peine, dans la chambre où son fils unique était pansé de ses blessures. Ce fils demandait encore la grâce de mourir dans sa maison. — „Retourne à ton exil, mon fils, puisque ta patrie l'ordonne,“ lui dit le doge, „et soumets-toi à sa volonté.“ Mais en rentrant dans son palais, ce malheureux vieillard s'évanouit, épuisé par la violence qu'il s'était faite. Jacob devait encore passer une année en prison à la Canée, avant qu'on lui rendit la même liberté limitée à laquelle il était réduit avant cet événement; mais à peine fut-il débarquée sur cette terre d'exil, qu'il y mourut de douleur.*

Dès-lors, et pendant quinze mois, le vieux doge, accablé d'années et de chagrins, ne recouvra plus la force de son corps ou celle de son âme; il n'assistait plus à aucun des conseils, et il ne pouvait plus remplir aucune des fonctions de sa dignité. Il était entré dans sa quatre-vingt-sixième année, et si le conseil des dix avait été susceptible de quelque pitié, il aurait attendu en silence la fin, sans doute prochaine, d'une carrière marquée par tant de gloire et tant de malheurs. Mais le chef du conseil des dix était alors Jacques Loredano, fils de Marc, et neveu de Pierre, le grand amiral, qui toute leur vie avaient été le ennemis acharnés du vieux doge. Ils avaient transmis leur haine à leurs enfans, et cette vieille rancune n'était pas encore satisfaite.** A l'instigation de Lo-

* Marin Sanuto, p. 1165. — *Navagiero Stor. Venez.* p. 1118.

** Vettor Santi *Storia civile Veneziana*, P. II. L. VIII. p. 715 — 717.

redano, Jérôme Barbarigo, inquisiteur d'état proposa au conseil des dix, au mois d'Octobre 1457, de soumettre Foscari à une nouvelle humiliation. Dès que ce magistrat ne pouvait plus remplir ses fonctions, Barbarigo demanda qu'on nommât un autre doge. Le conseil, qui avait refusé par deux fois l'abdication de Foscari, parce que la constitution ne pouvait la permettre, hésita avant de se mettre en contradiction avec ses propres décrets. Les discussions dans le conseil et la junte, se prolongèrent pendant huit jours, jusque fort avant dans la nuit. Cependant, on fit entrer dans l'assemblée Marco Foscari, procureur de Saint-Marc, et frère du doge, pour qu'il fût lié par le redoutable serment du secret, et qu'il ne pût arrêter les menées de ses ennemis. Enfin, le conseil se rendit auprès du doge, et lui demanda d'abdiquer volontairement un emploi qu'il ne pouvait plus exercer. „J'ai juré,“ répondit le vieillard, „de remplir jusqu'à ma mort, selon mon honneur et ma conscience, les fonctions auxquelles ma patrie m'a appelé. Je ne puis me délier moi-même de mon serment; qu'un ordre des conseils dispose de moi, je m'y soumettrai mais je ne le devancerai pas.“ Alors une nouvelle délibération du conseil délia François Foscari de son serment ducal, lui assura une pension de deux mille ducats pour le reste de sa vie, et lui ordonna d'évacuer en trois jours le palais, et de déposer les ornemens de sa dignité. Le doge ayant remarqué parmi les conseillers qui lui portèrent cet ordre, un chef de la quarantie qu'il ne connoissait pas, demanda son nom: „Je suis le fils de Marco Memmo,“ lui dit le conseiller. — „Ah! ton père était mon ami,“ lui

dit le vieux doge, en soupirant. Il donna aussitôt des ordres pour qu'on transportât ses effets dans une maison à lui; et le lendemain 23 Octobre on le vit, se soutenant à peine, et appuyé sur son vieux frère, redescendre ces mêmes escaliers sur lesquels, trente-quatre ans auparavant, on l'avait vu installé avec tant de pompe, et traverser ces mêmes salles où la république avait reçu ses sermens. Le peuple entier parut indigné de tant de dureté exercée contre un vieillard qu'il respectait et qu'il aimait; mais le conseil des dix fit publier une défense de parler de cette révolution, sous peine d'être traduit devant les inquisiteurs d'état. Le 20 Octobre, Pasqual Malipieri, procureur de Saint-Marc, fut élu pour successeur de Foscari; celui-ci n'eut pas néanmoins l'humiliation de vivre sujet, là où il avait régné. En entendant le son des cloches, qui sonnaient en actions de grâces pour cette élection, il mourut subitement d'une hémorragie causée par une veine qui s'éclata dans sa poitrine.*

Le doge, blessé de trouver constamment un contradicteur et un censeur si amer dans son frère, lui dit un jour en plein conseil; „Messire Augustin, vous faites tout votre possible pour hâter ma mort;

* Marin. Sanuto, *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, p. 1164. — *Chronicon Eugubinum*, T. XXI, p. 992. — Christoforo da Soldo *Istoria Bresciana*, T. XXI, p. 891 — *Navigero Storico Veneziana*, T. XXIII. p. 1120. — M. A. Sabellico, *Deca III*, L. VIII. f. 201.

vous vous flattez de me succéder; mais, si les autres vous connaissent aussi bien que je vous connais, ils n'auront gardé de vous élire." Là dessus il se leva, ému de colère, rentra dans son appartement, et mourut quelques jours après. Ce frère, contre lequel il s'était emporté, fut précisément le successeur qu'on lui donna. C'était un mérite dont on aimait à tenir compte; surtout à un parent, de s'être mis en opposition avec le chef de la république.* *Daru Histoire Venise Vol. II. sec. XI. p. 533.*

* The Venetians appear to have had a particular turn for breaking the hearts of their Doges: the above is another instance of the kind in the Doge Marco Barbarigo; he was succeeded by his brother Agostino Barbarigo whose chief merit is above-mentioned.

IN Lady Morgan's fearless and excellent work upon „Italy,“ I perceive the expression of „Rome of the Ocean“ applied to Venice. The same phrase occurs in the „Two Foscari.“ My publisher can vouch for me that the tragedy was written and sent to England some time before I had seen Lady Morgan's work, which I only received on the 16th of August. I hasten, however, to notice the coincidence, and to yield the originality of the phrase to her who first placed it before the public. I am the more anxious to do this as I am informed (for I have seen but few of the specimens, and those accidentally) that there have been lately brought against me charges of plagiarism. I have also had an anonymous sort of threatening intimation of the same kind, apparently with the intent of extorting money. To such charges I have no answer to make. One of them is ludicrous enough. I am reproached for having formed the description of a shipwreck in verse from the narratives of many *actual* shipwrecks in *prose*, selecting such materials as were most striking. Gibbon makes it a merit in Tasso „to have copied the minutest details of the Siege of Jerusalem from the Chronicles.“ In *me* it may be a demerit, I presume; let it remain so. Whilst I have been occupied in defending *Pope's* character, the lower orders of Grub-street appear to have been assailing *mine*: this is as it should be, both in them and in mine. One of the accusations in the nameless epistle alluded to is still more laugh-

able: it states seriously that I „received five hundred pounds for writing *advertisements* for Day and Martin's patent blacking!“ This is the highest compliment to my literary powers which I ever received. It states also „that a person has been trying to make acquaintance with Mr. Townsend, a gentleman of the law, who was with me on business in Venice three years ago, for the purpose of obtaining any defamatory particulars of my life from this occasional visitor.“ Mr. Townsend is welcome to say what he knows. I mention these particulars merely to show the world in general what the *literary* lower world contains, and their way of setting to work. Another charge made, I am told, in the „*Literary Gazette*“ is, that I wrote the notes to „*Queen Mab* ;“ a work which I never saw till some time after its publication, and which I recollect showing to Mr. Sotheby as a poem of great power and imagination. I never wrote a line of the notes, nor ever saw them except in their published form. No one knows better than their real author, that his opinions and mine differ materially upon the metaphysical portion of that work; though in common with all who are not blinded by baseness and bigotry, I highly admire the poetry of that and his other publications.

Mr. Southey, too, in his pious preface to a poem whose *plasphe-my* is as harmless as the sedition of *Wat Tyler*, because it is equally absurd with that sincere production, calls upon the „legislature to look to it,“ as the toleration of such writings led to the French Revolution: *not* such writings as *Wat Tyler*, but as those of the

„Satanic School.“ This is not true, and Mr. Southey knows it to be not true. Every French writer of any freedom was persecuted; Voltaire and Rousseau were exiled, Marmontel and Diderot were sent to the Bastille, and a perpetual war was waged with the whole class by the existing despotism. In the next place, the French Revolution was *not* occasioned by any writings whatsoever, but must have occurred had no such writers ever existed. It is the fashion to attribute every thing to the French revolution, and the French revolution to every thing but its real cause. That cause is obvious — the government exacted too much, and the people could neither *give* nor *bear more*. Without this, the Encyclopedists might have written their fingers off without the occurrence of a single alteration. And the *English* revolution — (the first, I mean) — what was it occasioned by? The *puritans* were surely as pious and moral as Wesley or his biographer? Acts — acts on the part of government, and *not* writings against them, have caused the past convulsions, and are tending to the future.

I look upon such as inevitable, though no revolutionist: I wish to see the English constitution restored and not destroyed. Born an aristocrat, and naturally one by temper, with the greater part of my present property in the funds, what have I to gain by a revolution? Perhaps I have more to lose in every way than Mr. Southey, with all his places and presents for panegyrics and abuse into the bargain. But that a revolution is inevitable, I repeat. The government may exult over the repression of petty tumults; these are but the receding

waves repulsed and broken for a moment on the shore, while the great tide is still rolling on and gaining ground with every breaker. Mr. Southey accuses us of attacking the religion of the country; and is he abetting it by writing lives of *Wesley*? One mode of worship is merely destroyed by another. There never was, nor ever will be, a country without a religion. We shall be told of *France* again: but it was only Paris and a frantic party, which for a moment upheld their dogmatic nonsense of theophilanthropy. The church of England, if overthrown, will be swept away by the sectarians and not by the sceptics. People are too wise, too well informed, too certain of their own immense importance in the realms of space, ever to submit to the impiety of doubt. There may be a few such diffident speculators, like water in the pale sunbeam of human reason, but they are very few; and their opinions, without enthusiasm or appeal to the passions, can never gain proselytes — unless, indeed, they are persecuted — *that*, to be sure, will increase any thing.

Mr. S., with a cowardly ferocity, exults over the anticipated „death-bed repentance“ of the objects of his dislike; and indulges himself in a pleasant „Vision of Judgment,“ in prose as well as verse, full of impious impudence. What Mr. S.'s sensations or ours may be in the awful moment of leaving this state of existence neither he nor we can pretend to decide. In common, I presume, with most men of any reflection, I have not waited for a „death-bed“ to repent of many of my actions, notwithstanding the „diabolical pride“ which this

pitiful renegado in his rancour would impute to those who scorn *him*. Whether upon the whole the good or evil of my deeds may preponderate is not for me to ascertain; but, as my means and opportunities have been greater, I shall limit my present defence to an assertion (easily proved, if necessary,) that I, „in my degree“ have done more real good in any one given year, since I was twenty, than Mr. Southey in the whole course of his shifting and turncoat existence. There are several actions to which I can look back with an honest pride, not to be damped by the calumnies of a hireling. There are others to which I recur with sorrow and repentance; but the only *act* of *my* life of which Mr. Southey can have any real knowledge, as it was one which brought me in contact with a near connexion of his own, did no dishonour to that connexion nor to me.

I am not ignorant of Mr. Southey's calumnies on a different occasion, knowing them to be such, which he scattered abroad on his return from Switzerland against me and others: they have done him no good in this world; and, if his creed be the right one, they will do him less in the next. What *his* „death-bed“ may be, it is not my province to predicate: let him settle it with his Maker, as I must do with mine. There is something at once ludicrous and blasphemous in this arrogant scribbler of all works sitting down to deal damnation and destruction upon his fellow creatures, with Wat Tyler, the Apotheosis of George the Third, and the Elegy on Martin the regicide, all shuffled together in his writing desk. One of his consola-

tions appears to be a Latin note from a work of a Mr. Landor, the author of „Gebir,“ whose friendship for Robert Southey will, it seems, „be an honour to him when the ephemeral disputes and ephemeral reputations of the day are forgotten.“ I for one neither envy him „the friendship,“ nor the glory in reversion which is to accrue from it, like Mr. Thelusson's fortune in the third and fourth generation. This friendship will probably be as memorable as his own epics, which (as I quoted to him ten or twelve years ago in „English Bards“) Porson said „would be remembered when Homer and Virgil are forgotten, and not till then.“ For the present, I leave him.

...to be a Latin note from a work of
the kind, the author of "The ... whose ...
... for Robert Roscar will ...
... to him when the ...
... of the day ...
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Byron, George Gordon Byron

The works of the right honourable Lord Byron

Bd.: 12

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